Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 44

www.saipantribune.com | THURSDAY MARCH 4, 2021 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune

'Former IPI CW workers have yet to be paid as promised' PAGE 6

Garapan revitalization plan modeled after Waikiki's success. PAGE 7

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'It's time to talk about Article 12'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Hofschneider

- Hofschneider says legislative initiative just a proposal and is not final
- Legislation applies only to private landownership
- Senate president interested to hear from millennials and Generation Z

It's time for the CNMI to talk about Article 12 of the CNMI Constitution because it is more than just a statement of landownership, according to Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) yesterday.

Hofschneider said Article 12 also means to ensure that Northern Marianas descents as a whole would remain a primary stakeholder in the development of the economy and the Commonwealth, by way of landownership.

Article 12 was established to restrict landownership in the CNMI to persons of Northern Marianas descent, or NMD.

See ARTICLE 12 on Page 4

Man drowns at Civic Center beach

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

A 50-year-old man who was fishing at the Civic Center beach in Susupe has drowned last Feb. 26, making this the second drowning fatality in 2021.

The victim was identified as Bobby Galanza Gabao, according to a text mes-

See MAN on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 8pm, March 3, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,742	3	7,745
Recovered	7,580	3	7,583
Active	28	3	31
Deaths	131	0	131
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			128,695

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	144	0	144
Traced via Travel Screening	118	0	118
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			197

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Saipan:	Tinian:	Rota:
Dose 1: 9,974	Dose 1: 523	Dose 1: 745
Dose 2: 7,595	Dose 2: 137	Dose 2: 258

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

From left, Governor's Council of Economic Advisers co-chairs Jerry Tan and Gov. Ralph Torres, and GCEA members Mike Sablan, Matt Deleon Guerrero, and Alex Sablan talk about how important the Public and Private Partnership at the membership meeting of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom. BEA CABRERA

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Governor's Council of Economic Advisers made its case about the benefits of the Public Private Partnership program before members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce during its meeting yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom.

GCEA co-chairs Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and TanHoldings president and CEO Jerry Tan were joined by other GCEA members to highlight the role of the PPP program in improving the islands' tourist sites in the last few months.

PPP combines the experience and resources of the private and public sectors to

See GCEA on Page 4

'All IPI assets could be liquidated'

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The decision whether to place Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC under a receivership and whether to appoint Joyce Tang to that position, which will be held tomorrow, March 5, could develop into full liquidation of IPI's assets to satisfy other judgments, or provide the framework for a liquidation process, according to IPI counsel Michael Dotts.

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INSIDE

BUSINESS
Chung Gi Wa marks 20 years, making it one of the oldest Korean restaurants in the CNMI.

PAGE 11

NATION
Texas is lifting its mask mandate, Gov. Greg Abbott said, making it the largest state to do so.

PAGE 12

LIFE & STYLE
A porcelain bowl bought for $35 at a yard sale turned out to be a rare, 15th century Chinese artifact.

PAGE 15

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Saipan Vegas Resort and Saipan Country Club is excited to announce the introduction of Glow Golf to the CNMI.

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Local

IPI hesitates about Tang as receiver

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Even though Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC and its mother company, Imperial Pacific International, Holdings Ltd., aren't opposed to Joyce Tang being appointed receiver of IPI if it goes into receivership, IPI counsel Michael Dotts feels that Tang cannot serve the dual role of being an IPI receiver while also trustee of the NMI Retirement Fund.

According to Dotts in IPI's filing on Tang acting as receiver, he believes that Tang, as the trustee of the NMI Retirement Fund, has a duty of loyalty to the retirees' interest.

With IPI being the main contributor to the Retirement Fund and with Tang's main duty to the retirees, Dotts said she cannot, at the same time, maintain the duty of strict impartiality required of a receiver over the assets of IPI.

"Although IPI does not object to Tang serving as the receiver for IPI, she should not continue as the trustee of the NMI Retirement Fund and serve as the receiver here," said Dotts.

In addition, IPI opposes Tang using her own law firm, Civille & Tang PLLC, as her counsel. "No one should be appointed who is in such circumstances or would by the appointment be placed in a dual position that there arise conflicts between her personal interest and her duty as receiver," said Dotts.

Dotts said that should Tang act as both receiver and have the law firm that she holds an equal interest in act as the attorney for the receivership estate, she will have a dual role,

See IPI on Page 11

Bill wants to allow municipalities to run public golf courses

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) has introduced a bill that would allow municipal governments of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota to create and run public golf courses to entice more tourists, generate local revenues, and provide recreation for residents.

Hofschneider's Senate Bill 22-31 will add to the list of authorized local matters the establishment and regulation of municipal golf courses in order to give municipal governments the authority to construct and operate such golf courses.

Hofschneider said Tinian is the only CNMI senatorial district that does not have a golf course, which is essential to the tourism industry. Although Rota and Saipan have golf courses, they are owned and operated by hotels.

"These are private golf courses that open and close at the whim of the hotel owners," said the Senate president in his bill.

Currently, he said, Tinian residents have to go to Saipan to play golf, which is inconvenient and unaffordable to some residents.

Hofschneider said municipal governments can also generate revenue from the golf fees that are imposed on those that will use municipal golf courses.

He said municipal governments can establish public-private partnerships to construct and operate these municipal golf courses.

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Participants sought for 'Wahoo in the Marianas' fishing tournament

Non-profit organization Tasi to Table Inc. is hosting a student-led fishing tournament called Wahoo in the Marianas at the Smiling Cove Marina in Puerto Rico this Saturday, March 6.

In line with this, all fishing enthusiasts are invited to participate in this tournament. The grand prize winner will receive a $2,000 cash prize, the second-place winner will receive $1,500, and third-place winner will receive $1,000. Other prizes may be made available for fourth and fifth place winners and will be announced at the registration.

Registration for the Wahoo in the Marianas fishing tournament will begin tomorrow, March 5, from 4 to 6pm at the Smiling Cove Marina. A $200 fee covers one captain and two anglers. Additional anglers will cost $25.

Due to unpredictable weather patterns in the CNMI, dates for registration and tournament are set, but may still change based on those circumstances.

TTT youth clubs met last Feb. 6 to finalize the working committees that are tasked with the overall direction of the tournament. The committees formed are for registration, logistics, solicitation, marketing and PR, ground set up, finance, and distribution.

The assigned TTT officer for this event, Gene Weaver, who also serves as TTT president, will provide overall guidance and brings his vast experience in coordinating and organizing fishing tournaments on Saipan.

The event is sponsored by Mobil Oil Marianas and IT&E.

"Mobil is honored to sponsor Tasi to Table's annual student-led Wahoo in the Marianas fishing tournament. We support TTT's unique opportunity to take students' learning beyond the classroom and into the community," said Anthony Wenceslao, Mobil Oil Marianas Commercial Fuels area manager.

"IT&E is a proud sponsor of TTT's student-led Wahoo in the Marianas fishing tournament. We are elated to see the progress of how far they've come and knowing that our youth are in control of the event," said Paul Guerrero, IT&E Enterprise Key Accounts mManager.

WIM is a fundraising activity for the Tasi to Table Inc. to support its outreach efforts in schools. ***(Neil Fama)***

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy birthday greetings go out to Aida Diva, who is celebrating her special day today. May you have all the joy your heart can hold, all the smile a day can bring, and all the blessings a life can unfold. May you get the world's best in everything. Wishing you a happy birthday! Greetings from Dabarkadas and CHC beauties.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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STK:3P294
KBB: $24,581
2019 MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER SE
SALE PRICE $18,995
11,386 MILES
STK:19HS968
KBB: $19,682
2015 MAZDA MAZDA5 SOLD
SALE PRICE $8,995
61,806 MILES • STK: 20M138A • KBB:$9,900
2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $14,995
7,910 MILES • STK:8HS875 • KBB: $19,496
2019 MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER SE
SALE PRICE $18,995
11,486 MILES • STK:19HS967 • KBB: $19,633
2014 MAZDA CX-9 SOLD
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34,682 MILES • STK:4P298 • KBB: $13,199
2016 HYUNDAI VELOSTER
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39,217MILES • STK: 20H068–A • KBB: $15,830
2019 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL 2WD SOLD
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9,098 MILES • STK:19HS959 • KBB: $19,477
2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $13,995
38,494 MILES • STK:7R235 • KBB: $16,146
2017 MAZDA CX-3 GT AWD
SALE PRICE $16,995
18,475 MILES • STK: 7P295 • KBB: $18,470
2018 HONDA CIVIC EXT
SALE PRICE $18,995
9,993 MILES • STK:18HS935 • KBB: $22,425
2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $13,995
34,789 MILES • STK:7R218 • KBB: $15,129
2018 MAZDA MAZDA6 SPORT
SALE PRICE $16,995
7,365 MILES • STK:18HS965C • KBB: $22,095
2015 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER LE
SALE PRICE $18,995
62,811 MILES • STK:5HS735A • KBB: $19,031
2016 TOYOTA PRIUS C
SALE PRICE $14,995
48,814 MILES • STK:20D134A • KBB: $16,585
2019 HYUNDAI KONA
SALE PRICE $16,995
11,601 MILES • STK:19HS999 • KBB: $18,793
2015 TOYOTA TACOMA PRE-RUNNER SOLD
$21,995
44,586 MILES • STK:15P303 • KBB: $24,377
2017 MAZDA MAZDA6 GT
SALE PRICE $15,995
44,751 MILES • STK:17P305 • KBB: $17,242
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NMC Rota, Tinian receive Public Entity Advocate of the Year awards

By NEIL FAMA
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REPORTER

The Tinian and Rota campuses of the Northern Marianas College were recognized as Champions of Equal Opportunity in the CNMI and were chosen as Public Entity Advocates of the Year by the CNMI Disability Network Partners last Tuesday, March 2, at the Hibiscus Hall of Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

Both campuses were acknowledged for being one of the most accessible buildings on their respective islands.

DNP recognized that the two campuses have Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant parking spaces, restrooms, (touchless faucets, soap dispenses, towel dispensers in bathrooms), doors handles, etc. Their staff have also been very accommodating to individuals with disabilities, often allowing "Very Outspoken Individuals Can Each Succeed" (VOICES) and DNP agencies to use their facilities for meetings and training on both islands. Staff also make certain that guests comply with federal ADA regulations and standards. Rota is also currently working on increasing its accessibility.

NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico said the college is thankful for the recognition and indicated that the institution aims to do more to enhance individuals' abilities and to help them with their academic and professional journeys.

Maria Aguon, executive director for the NMC Tinian Center, recently completed her certificate program as a UCEDD ambassador.

Robert Mendiola, who works at NMC Rota, is also the president of the VOICES chapter on Rota.

Jennifer-Eilleen E. Castro, director of the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Awareness at NMC, said that UCEDD works with public and private partners "to celebrate the outstanding achievements and efforts of numerous individual and entities on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota who continue to pave the way toward making our Commonwealth more inclusive and accessible."

Castro added that the collaboration that continues to be demonstrated by various disability stakeholders is what the team is most proud of.

"Together, with dedicated service and teamwork, we can definitely achieve more. We ask that you continue to support UCEDD, DDC Council, [Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc.], Center for Living Independently, and several other partners as we work together to enhance the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the CNMI," she said.

From top left, CNMI University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the Northern Marianas College program manager Arlene Yamagata, NMC interim vice president for Learning and Student Success Charlotte Cepeda, NMC-UCEDD director Jennifer-Eilleen E. Castr, NMC acting president Dave Attao, Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. program manager Grag Borja, NMC Rota Center Program director Diana Hocog, NMC Tinian Center executive director Maria Aguon, and NMC Rota IT Help Desk technician Robert Mendiola. From bottom left, UCEDD trainees Heejung Sin, Eloise Lopez, Ruth Torres, Tahani Mafnas, Victoria Matsunaga, and Mary Deala. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ALL

From Page 1

According to Dotts, the appointed receiver may be required to sell all of IPI's assets that are currently valued at $11,199,680.09 in total because IPI is facing several lawsuits that are nearing final judgment and thus full liquidation of the company is possible.

Dotts said that one of the main issues that came up at the March 1, 2021, hearing was the scope of the receivership. Originally, it was only supposed to cover the sale of property enough to satisfy the U.S. Department of Labor consent judgment. However, the amount of assets needed to be sold could exceed $10 million— the consent judgement that will purge it of contempt (the base amount of $1,982.793.00), plus $9,416,887.09 in tax liability owed the CNMI, plus $800,000 in other amounts owed employees.

According to Dotts, the amount owed USDOL to purge the contempt and the interests of the CNMI under the tax lien has to be satisfied first.

The CNMI recorded a tax lien against IPI on Aug. 20, 2020, in the amount of $9,416,887.09. The tax lien applies to all property of IPI, both real and personnel.

Even though the tax lien came later than the consent judgment, Dotts said that the tax lien takes priority over the consent judgment because the tax lien was recorded.

As for the $800,000 in back wages that's owed employees, Dotts said that all amounts owed IPI's employees should be paid first so that IPI can avoid being held in contempt.

Dotts said that IPI began having financial problems that impacted payroll in June 2020.

MAN

From Page 1

sage from Department of Public Safety spokesman Dre Pangelinan.

In a brief interview with Pangelinan, he said that a call came in from a friend of Gabao's, who said that Gabao was supposed to be back on shore at that time (around 8pm) but when his friend couldn't find him, that's when they called for police assistance.

A separate DPS statement sent to media said that the *Zodiac I* rescue boat was dispatched from the Smiling Cove Marina at around 8:45pm and headed south toward the Civic Center area. At about 9pm, units on land spotted a white fishing cooler that was drifting south, just outside the Saipan World Resort in Susupe, which was then relayed to the crew of the *Zodiac* boat who went to the location.

Once units arrived at the location, they noticed that the fishing cooler was still strapped to an unresponsive individual submerged underwater. At that time DPS did not identify who the individual was.

Pangelinan said that officers secured the individual on the *Zodiac* and tried to resuscitate him as they drove toward shore. Once they arrived on shore, medics transported the individual to the Commonwealth Health Center where Dr. Rodney Klassen pronounced the victim dead at 9:55pm due to drowning.

Pangelinan said that Gabao's family has already been informed, but it was not immediately learned why it took DPS five days to release a statement about the accident.

According to Gabao's immediate family members on Facebook, Gabao was supposed to go back to the Philippines in 10 months to be reunited with his family after two decades of being away.

Gabao's son wrote on his Facebook page that he was only 10 years old when Gabao left to work abroad, and he did not see Gabao for 18 years.

It was also learned that Gabao had already fixed up his house in the Philippines for when he would retire and be with his family.

The first drowning in 2021 was another man who drowned at Lao Lao Bay in Dandan last Feb. 13.

ARTICLE 12

From Page 1

The president also clarified that Senate Legislative 22-01 that he introduced, which seeks to amend Article 12, is not final as it's only a proposal. He said the Legislature needs the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members of each house present and voting to amend Article 12, then it will be put on the ballot for people to vote on at the next election.

Hofschneider said in a statement yesterday that, along with labor and capital, land is one of three primary inputs needed to produce final goods and services for the wider economy. "No amount of labor and capital can produce a good without land where the good can be created," he said.

By restricting landownership to NMDs, the Constitution gives NMDs the sole right to own a fundamental building block of the economy. "Is this right truly complete, though? Can it be called 'ownership' when a landowner is restricted from using her or his asset to its fullest potential?" he asked.

Hofschneider believes it should be the individual—not the government—who decides what to do with their land. "Not all NMDs are interested in remaining on our islands, nor can they guarantee that they or their heirs will be around in 55 years to reclaim leased lands," he said.

Thus, should the government restrict individual landowners from garnering the best value for their assets. "Is Article 12 fulfilling its intended purpose?" he asked.

Hofschneider introduced Senate Legislative Initiative 22-01 last Feb. 25 to amend Article 12 to remove the restriction on the alienation of land in the Commonwealth.

Hofschneider said the legislative initiative will allow Northern Marianas descents landowners to fully exercise their real property rights, and to reduce the NMD percentage of ownership interest in an NMD corporation.

Hofschneider said he introduced the legislative initiative to place these questions before people at a significant moment in Commonwealth history.

"The difficulties we've endured over the last five years highlight the need for us to remain open-minded about how we build our economy," he said.

Although amending Article 12 is not the only option for the CNMI, it is one that opens up a variety of other options for NMD landowners, he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

GCEA

From Page 1

work on the vision of transforming the CNMI into a world-class destination.

Speaking from the government's side, Torres said the downtime in the last several months due to COVID-19 has helped his office put things into perspective. "Where is the CNMI at, what is our market, where do we go from here and what is our goal for the next 10 years? At the end of the day, we want to make the CNMI world-class and having the Chamber as a partner moves us in the right direction," he said.

"Turning the CNMI into a world-class destination is the mission of everyone. …I know it isn't easy and we are [in] unchartered territory but you made our decisions much easier with your cooperation… our partnership is very critical for the entire CNMI," he added.

According to Tan, they have been informing different sectors about their projects, accomplishments, and plans. "This is our fifth meeting in recent days. …We have met with the Cabinet members of the administration, board members of the Marianas Visitors Authority, the House and Senate separately and now the Chamber," he said.

One of the things the GCEA wants to achieve in the PPP is to establish a close working relationship between the government and private sector. Tan said this was already his vision when he was still chairman of the MVA—for the MVA board to create a committee that will allow the private sector to be involved with MVA.

"…We toured around the island like a tourist and we realized how badly damaged many of our tourist sites are from [Super Typhoon] Yutu and some even from [Typhoon] Soudelor. …Now, because of the pandemic, we don't know when the tourists will come back and it is [incumbent upon] us to present our island in much better condition than what we saw last year," he added.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

IPI

From Page 2

in which she will in effect be both the client and the attorney.

In order to avoid appearance of impropriety, Dotts said that a law firm other than Tang's law firm should be selected as her counsel.

In a separate filing, attorney Juan T. Lizama, counsel to IPIH chair Cui Lie Jie, said that Cui agrees with any hiring of attorneys from Tang's own firm.

"In the interest of reducing costs and legal fees, rather than hiring an outside firm, she should be allowed to seek legal assistance from her own firm or from any individual attorney in the firm," said Lizama. "The goal is to satisfy the judgment and to quickly conclude the receivership."

However, Lizama said that if the U.S. Department of Labor and the CNMI Retirement Fund have any potential conflict between them, or if there has been in the past, then he could see a possible conflict for Tang in the future.

"I would ask the court to consider not only the day-to-day tasks of Tang in her role as receiver in this case but to Tang's clients also and whether those clients might have a conflict in the future," said Lizama.

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'Former IPI workers have yet to be paid as promised'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

To date, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has yet to pay some of its former foreign workers their owed wages, according to House Committee on Gaming chair Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan).

At the Committee on Gaming meeting Tuesday afternoon, Propst said these foreign workers, some of whom attended and spoke during public comments at the first committee meeting last Jan. 28, were promised by IPI they would be paid "three-fourths" of their earnings under their contract, as guaranteed in their contract under the Code of Federal Regulations' assurances and obligations of employers.

Propst

He said these workers are also owed "paid time off" from IPI.

In response to *Saipan Tribune*'s question yesterday as to how many stranded foreign workers he is talking about, Propst said he does not have the exact number but was told that there are close to 100 altogether, including 11 to 12 Turkish workers. It is unknown how many of these workers have Commonwealth-Only Transitional Workers (CW-1) visas; most were brought in on H2-B immigration visas.

At the Tuesday's House Committee on Gaming meeting, the lawmaker said these foreign workers have received emails or print-outs from IPI's Human Resources what they are owed. Propst cited an email received from a former IPI employee who was promised she would be paid a total of 547 hours on July 14, 2020.

Propst said he and committee vice chair Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan) have been communicating with these workers and that, according to these workers, IPI will pay for their tickets to return to their country of origin, but will not pay them their three-fourths guarantee and paid time off.

Propst said the amounts owed these workers are relatively small, with some as little as $6,800.

"These workers are afraid that if they leave, they will never be paid by IPI," said the lawmaker, adding that these are valid concerns as all of IPI's former workers who left the island last year have yet to be paid.

"These stranded guest workers have no source of income, no financial means to support themselves, and have relied on the kindness of friends, family, and community members," Propst said.

These stranded workers, he said, are willing to return home once they are paid what they are legally owed.

"Colleagues, these workers should not have to hire an attorney to force IPI to pay them their owed wages," Propst said.

He asked lawmakers to do all they can to ensure these stranded workers are paid their wages and are returned home and reunited with their loved ones.

As for IPI's former Turkish workers, Propst said 16 of the 28 already left Saipan last Feb. 8. He said those 16 workers left without being paid their paid time off and other wages owed them. As they had a four-day trip back to Turkey and were leaving Saipan with empty pockets, Propst said these workers asked for travel money to help with food and basic amenities during their long journey home. He said IPI had agreed to pay each worker $250 in cash if they would sign a "general release" form that released IPI of all claims these workers had against them.

"This was shameful and illegal, as these workers could barely speak English, let alone read any of this on the general release form," Propst said, adding that U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona has already declared this general release form "null and void."

He said the U.S. Department of Labor stated that the general release form is in violation of the terms of the April 11, 2019, consent judgment prohibiting retaliation, and is an improper retaliatory attempt to have employees waive their rights under the judgment and under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The Committee on Gaming will soon hold a legislative oversight hearing on IPI matters.

5.0-magnitude quake in Guam

At 11:39pm on March 2, 2021, a report of a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred 175 kilometers east-southeast of Yigo, Guam. Currently, no tsunami warnings or advisories are issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000.***(PR)***

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW/SWMD21-ITB-022

SUBMISSION DATE: March 19, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Procurement of Services for Removal, Packaging, Containment, and Shipping of Hazardous E-Waste Materials collected at the Lower Base Transfer Station"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **Fifty Dollars ($50.00**) is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Mandatory Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **March 16, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the **Solid Waste Management Division Conference Room, Lower Base Transfer Saipan**. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 23, 2021** to **Mr. Blas T. Mafnas, Acting Director of Solid Waste Management Division**, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan or fax to (670) 322-2726. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

Northern Marianas College
Procurement and Property Management
P.O. Box 501250 • Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Phone: (670) 237-6824
www.marianas.edu

CONSULTING SERVICES
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
NMC RFP 21-001

Northern Marianas College (The College) is soliciting competitive sealed Proposals for the Consulting Services for the Aquaculture Parks, Saipan, Tinian and Rota projects.

Specifications and Scope of Work packets may be picked up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. P, commencing February 08, 2021 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m.** for the Electronic packet, please send request to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

Pre-Proposal conference is scheduled for February 17, 2021 09:00am. attendance is strongly recommended. NMC continues to practice social distancing due to the ongoing COVID 19 restrictions. The pre-proposal conference will take place through video conference technology, Zoom. Zoom ID No.: 939 6768 1365.

Electronic Proposal submission:
NMCRFP21-001@marianas.edu
Due Date/Time: 4:00 pm, March 11, 2021, (CNMI).

Sealed Proposal, hard copies submission:
Procurement & Property Management Office, Bldg. P, As Terlaje Campus
Due Date and Time: 4:00pm, March 11, 2021, (CNMI).

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through USDA-NIFA, authorized under the Smith Lever Act Section 3b & 3c award# 2017-41100.

In accordance with Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is not available to local businesses for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The College reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College.

Approved by:

/s/ Anita Camacho
Procurement & Property Manager

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through USDA-NIFA, authorized under the Smith Lever Act Section 3b & 3c award# 2017-41100 and the Hatch Act as amended August 11, 1955, award #2019-31100 (Regular).

The Northern Marianas College is a Land Grant Institution accredited by the Senior College and University Commission of the Western Association for Schools and Colleges.

FOR SHORT OR LONG TERM LEASE

Five (5) lots or more containing an area of 1,016 square meters each within Subdivision Survey Plat of Lot 514 NEW-3-R1, located in Fina Sisu, Saipan.

Serious inquiries only. Email to galu4258@yahoo.com

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM/MOR-048

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2021 • TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) FOUR-IN-ONE MOBILE CRUSHER FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROTA UNDER THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MR. EPIPHANIO CABRERA, ADMINISTRATOR OF OGM, VIA EMAIL TO epi.cabrera@gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS **MARCH 10, 2021.** ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL **NOT** BE ENTERTAINED. QUESTIONS/AMSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL BIDDERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS.

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM/RDCCA-046

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2021 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) NEW UTILITY SIDE-BY-SIDE VEHICLE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & CULTURAL AFFAIRS (ROTA BRANCH) UNDER THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MR. EPIPHANIO CABRERA, ADMINISTRATOR OF OGM, VIA EMAIL TO epi.cabrera@gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS **MARCH 10, 2021.** ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL **NOT** BE ENTERTAINED. QUESTIONS/AMSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL BIDDERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS.

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-BECQ/DEQ-047

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS "F" PICK-UP TRUCK FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFTEY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR OFBECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-BECQ/DEQ-050

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2021 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) CLASS "I" VEHICLES FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFTEY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR OFBECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

Garapan revitalization plan modeled after Waikiki's success

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Using a $11.2-million grant from the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce, the long-awaited Garapan Revitalization Plan is taking off, modelled after the success of Waikiki in Hawaii, one of the most popular tourist destination in the planet.

Concepcion

This is the vision that prompted the Office of Planning and Development to work with former Honolulu mayor Mufi Hannemann and his partners, Rick Egged and Greg Hirata, in 2019 to point the task force in the right direction, according to OPD deputy director Chris Concepcion.

He conceded that billions of dollars were spent to transform Waikiki into what it is today and that is money the CNMI doesn't have. "It's Hawaii so they have the money and we don't, but thankfully we are much of a smaller scale than Waikiki, so we think it's manageable," he said. That includes building sidewalks in Garapan and getting rid of unorganized parking curbs, among others.

Part of how Waikiki did it is it created the Waikiki Improvement District Association that turned into an improvement district where businesses pay into a fund that takes care of daily trash collection, landscaping, upkeep and maintenance, and minor repair of roads and sidewalks, etc.

"Ultimately, the plan is to turn Garapan into a 'Community Improvement District,' a non-profit organization composed of commercial establishments in the area that makes it a special zone dedicated to the management, upkeep, and sustenance of Garapan," he said.

Concepcion said this undertaking needs to be created through the legislative process, with the CID governed by a board of directors composed of members from the business community and the government. "We want to target stakeholders particularly the business community who are invested in this endeavor. …We want them to have majority voting so they can control the vote and their money," he said.

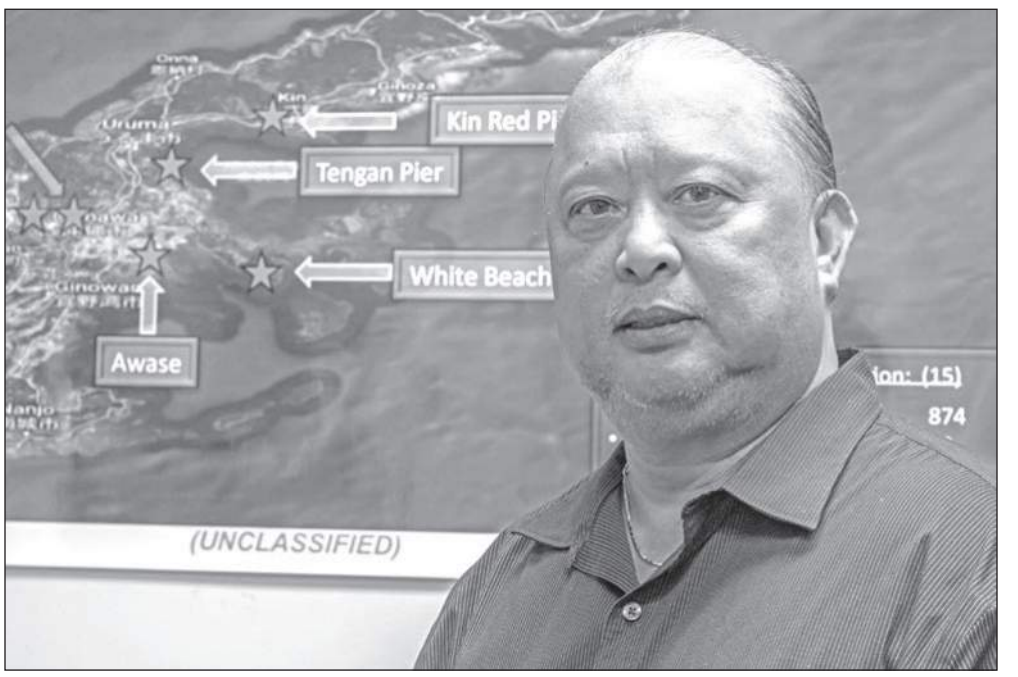
Having a CID, though, won't absolve the government of its responsibility as it will still be responsible for infrastructure in the area. "Garapan's development is really the combined work of private and public entities," he said.

The GRTF initial studies have found that some commercial properties have encroached on public land or built right up their property line. "They essentially blocked themselves out from having their own parking. If they want their own parking, they would have to design it and integrate it within their property…Since we want to add more parking spaces in Garapan, we are going to put street parking…that is built in an organized and straight manner. …This will invite more people—residents and tourists alike—to go to Garapan and help the place get back the reputation of being the center of the tourism industry," Concepcion said.

As for the Paseo de Marianas itself and the idea of turning it back into a street, Concepcion said they are looking at creating a hybrid, when it can function as a street and then closed off on certain days for community events like the Christmas at the Marianas or the Thursday Street Market. "I think it's very possible as we see it in other countries, other locations in the world, and it's beautiful," Concepcion added.

He knows how big this undertaking will be, especially since the construction timeline is three years but his team remains focused. "It's for the betterment of the CNMI.

"Garapan has seen its glory days but we want to reinvigorate that," he said. "We want to bring back those good days where we have thousands of tourists arriving, walking around on a daily basis, and spending money that builds our economy and tax revenue that enables the government to fulfill obligations. …The revitalization plan will be in phases and go street by street, which is the standard in the construction process because we don't want to disrupt businesses," he added.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Olympio "Oly" Magofna, from Tanapag on Saipan in the CNMI, has been the emergency management officer of Commander, Fleet Activities Okinawa since joining CFAO in July 2016. As EMO he is responsible for the establishment, implementation, and sustainment of a comprehensive all-hazard emergency management program in order to prepare for and mitigate the potential effects of, respond to, and recover from natural or man-made emergencies impacting CFAO and its tenant commands spread out over Okinawa. His environmental portrait was taken onboard CFAO at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan on Feb. 19, 2021.

U.S. NAVY/MCS1 DAVID R. KRIGBAUM

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAES-21-010

A&E Design Services for the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Upgrade (S18-065a)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for the Design Services of the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade in Agingan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RAES package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RAES-21-010, A&E Design Services for Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 11, 2021. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAES does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAES and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 22, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Larry Manacop, CUC Water/Wastewater, Acting Chief Engineer – via email larry.manacop@cucgov.org; Westen Knudsen, Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email westen.knudsen@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Administrative Technician Senior – via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

CNMI DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

PUBLIC NOTICE

The CNMI Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division is now conducting the CNMI 2021 Prevailing Wage Study (PWS) survey and notifies all businesses and employers in the CNMI to log on to the CSD Data Collection Portal and complete the PWS survey questionnaire.

All private businesses, public agencies, and organizations in the CNMI, with and without employees, are urged to participate in the 2021 PWS survey.

The survey data collection period will begin on March 1, 2021, and end on March 31, 2021.

Data Collection Portal Link: https://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp/

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXI, Issue No. 44

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

We need to help women during the pandemic and beyond

The pandemic undoubtedly wreaked some form of havoc on just about everyone's life. But statistics are piling up showing that it has hurt women more, particularly those who are African American and Latinx, eroding many of the gains in the workforce that had been made in recent years. Around 2.5 million women dropped out of the labor force or lost their jobs during the pandemic, compared to 1.8 million men, according to Labor Department data released last month. The situation is so dire that Vice President Kamala Harris called it a "mass exodus" and "national emergency" in a recent op-ed in The Washington Post.

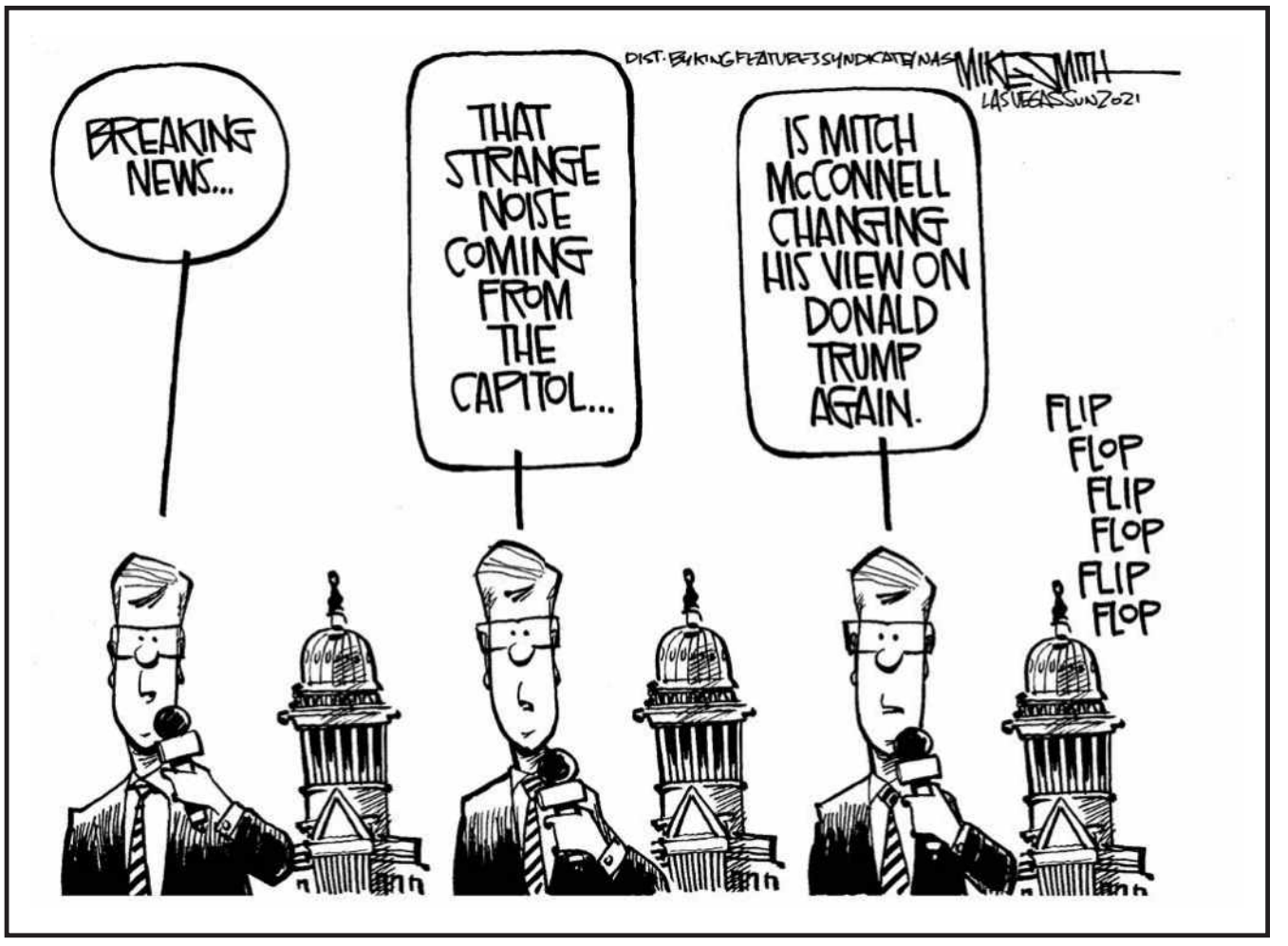
Virtual school isn't the only thing disrupting the lives of women, who still shoulder much of the parenting responsibility in this country. They are also more likely to have face-to-face jobs in hard-hit industries such as hospitality, retail and dining, which have experienced large cuts. When the streets of the Inner Harbor are barren and empty of tourists, that equates to many residents being out of work as these are jobs that can't go virtual. Many women have also lost their small businesses during the pandemic, whether it be a small retail shop or nail salon. In February 2020, around 5 million women were business owners. By April, 1 in 4 had closed their doors, Harris noted.

In many ways, the last year exposed the fragility of the working woman that existed long before the pandemic. As the Brookings Institute put it in a recent report on why women are suffering: "COVID-19 is hard on women because the U.S. economy is hard on women, and this virus excels at taking existing tensions and ratcheting them up." More than two-thirds of women were the sole, primary or co-breadwinner of the family before the pandemic. And now they are struggling to survive. Carol Ott, who does tenant advocacy for the Fair Housing Action Center of Maryland said the number of clients coming in for assistance has increased from 239 to more than 900 at the end of 2020—and most are Black women.

A state relief package will offer some financial assistance, and legislation for federal relief will, we hope, soon pass in Congress. But more long-term help is needed that will help women get back on financial solid footing and improve their lives even after the pandemic is over. The General Assembly could start with approving the Time to Care Act of 2021 (House Bill 375, Senate Bill 211), which would require employers to provide up to 12 weeks of paid family emergency leave to their workers. The Maryland Essential Workers' Protection Act (H.B. 581, S.B. 486) would also offer essential workers, once again mostly women, extra financial help in the form of hazard pay at a time when many are eating the costs of personal protective equipment required for their jobs. Companies, especially the ones whose business has done well during the pandemic, should offer such pay or bonuses themselves, but we know many will not.

The pandemic has also shown companies that more flex-

See PANDEMIC on Next Page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MIKE SMITH
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BREAKING NEWS...
THAT STRANGE NOISE COMING FROM THE CAPITOL...
IS MITCH McCONNELL CHANGING HIS VIEW ON DONALD TRUMP AGAIN.
FLIP FLOP FLIP FLOP FLIP FLOP

A lesson from the last 'normal' pre-pandemic weekend: We're not as smart as we think we are

By MARY SCHMICH
Chicago Tribune

Mary Schmich is a columnist for the Chicago Tribune *and winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for commentary.*

What was your life like at this time last year?

You may not remember the details, but if you think back to the end of February 2020, or the first few days of March, you may remember that you still resided in the vanished land we now call normal. Most Americans did.

One thing I remember is that on Friday, Feb. 28, I wrote my first coronavirus column, a piece on how we needed to stop touching our faces if we wanted to avoid this new disease that didn't yet have a formal name or explanation. "No face touching!" was guidance from the experts, and it seemed worth sharing.

But fewer than half a dozen Americans had died of the virus at that point. If we'd heard about masks, it was only to be told we didn't need them. Social distancing? Not in the common vocabulary. Lockdown? Here in the land of the free and the home of the brave, that was something that happened only in prisons.

Even then, though, I felt a flutter of apprehension, the kind you feel when you sense a storm coming while the sky remains clear. I'd flown back from New York earlier in the week and, noticing a guy in the airport security line wearing a mask, I'd thought, "Does he know something the rest of us don't?" I registered the fear and then got on the packed airplane without a second thought.

That Friday night, after I finished my face-touching column, I headed without qualm to the Billy Goat Tavern in downtown Chicago for a farewell party for a couple of colleagues. Dozens of us crowded inside, drinking, laughing, crying a little, shaking hands, hugging. We probably touched our faces.

Superspreader event? Who'd ever heard of that? Fortunately, as far as I know, that night didn't turn out to be one, but a year later I often think of how easily it could have.

I look back on that weekend as an anniversary of sorts, the anniversary of the last "normal" weekend, because even though I went out to dinner and to the gym the following weekend, it was with virus-induced anxiety. Since anniversaries are a nudge for reflection, today it's worth reflecting on what we didn't know a year ago, what we couldn't allow ourselves to believe and what our ignorance then might teach us that's helpful today.

Consider a few Tribune headlines from early 2020:

Jan. 21: O'Hare to begin screening passengers for virus. Cases of the new respiratory illness confirmed in U.S.

Jan. 30: Chicago reports the first coronavirus person-to-person transmission in U.S.

Feb. 6: Despite low risk, coronavirus fears viral

Feb. 9: First American dies of coronavirus

Feb. 12: WHO settles on an official name for virus: COVID-19

March 2: U.S. death toll climbs to 6 as viral crisis eases in China

March 8: WHO resists declaring coronavirus a "pandemic." Organization says label could cause some to lose hope

Soon, the American death toll climbed from six to nine to 11. Flight attendants started offering hand sanitizer to passengers, and hand sanitizer sold out at stores. Starbucks stopped using refillable cups. Finally, on March 11, the World Health Organization applied the name it had been avoiding: pandemic.

Let that sink in. In the course of a few winter weeks, we went from no known person-to-person transmissions in this country to a declaration of pandemic.

Now here we are a year later. Late winter 2021. A few days ago, President Joe Biden ordered flags lowered to half-staff on all federal buildings to mark the COVID-related deaths of more than 500,000 Americans. Half a million people. Each one of them was a person, and most of them, it's safe to assume, were loved by other persons who are now in mourning.

Endless words have been spent on how much we've all lost in this year of death and disease, how much this time has changed us, individually and collectively. Our imaginations have been stretched to the limits, and it's still too soon to understand all the ways such vast loss has changed us.

Now here we are a year later, with hope on the horizon. Vaccines have arrived. We hear predictions of a return to gathering, to travel, to a life that resembles what we remember.

But if there's one lesson to take from the last normal weekend, it's this: We're not as smart as we think we are. This virus and its new strains will outfox us if we aren't careful. Careful means continuing to wear masks and keep our distance and wash our hands, to endure these precautions a while longer. We're a lot wiser than we were a year ago, but we need to stay aware of how much we don't know.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

No shelter from the storms

By PRINCELLA TALLEY
PROGRESSIVE MEDIA PROJECT

Last month, when Winter Storm Uri hit the South and West, it caused deaths and massive power outages due to freezing temperatures. Nearly 80 people were reported dead, including six people in Texas who were unsheltered and homeless.

The cost of repairing the damage will be in the billions, but the impact on people who are experiencing homelessness is incalculable.

Climate change increases the possibility of unsheltered homelessness because more people are unexpectedly losing their homes. As natural disasters increase in frequency and intensity, more residents throughout the South are becoming displaced.

In Texas, 6,000 homes in Jefferson County were flooded when Tropical Storm Imelda brought more than 40 inches of rain. When Hurricane Harvey hit in 2017, more than 135,000 homes were in the path of its destruction. In Louisiana, Hurricane Katrina was estimated to have destroyed 800,000 homes.

Most recently, Hurricane Laura damaged more than 130,000 residences and completely destroyed 10,000 homes.

In all, these storms put more than 1 million people at risk of unsheltered homelessness—and that's just in Texas and Louisiana.

Federal and state investments in climate solutions should include funding for placement services that protect and house those in need—especially those who don't have four walls to shelter their bodies as temperatures rise and fall unnaturally.

These individuals, forced to live outdoors with limited access to medical care and basic human necessities, are more at risk of heat stroke and hypothermia. Heatstroke can strike within 15 minutes, and hypothermia in 10 minutes or less.

Black, indigenous and other people of color are most at risk of becoming homeless. But this is an issue that reaches across all demographics.

During the past decade, some 20 million people per year have been rendered homeless by environmental disasters, according to the World Economic Forum. Failure to act on climate is expected to double the number of deaths related to air pollution worldwide by 2050. If this happens, unsheltered homeless people would bear this burden most significantly, as they constantly inhale outdoor air.

Already, the life expectancy of people who become unsheltered homeless has been calculated to be almost 20 years shorter. More than 500,000 Americans live homeless each day, and at least 35% of them have no shelter at all.

Shelters offer limited capacity to meet social distancing guidelines created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other public places such as stores, where unsheltered homeless people could often step inside to escape dangerous cold or heat, are closing earlier or shutting down permanently. As a result, unsheltered homeless people are being left to fend for themselves against the elements.

The effects of climate change on homeless people need more than a mention. Severe climate impacts from storms like Uri should remind us of the many people whose lives are at risk even as they remain invisible to the public at large. For climate policy to not address the crisis of homelessness is a disservice to humanity.

Princella Talley is a Public Voices Fellow of the OpEd Project and Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. This column was produced for the Progressive Media Project, which is run by The Progressive *magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service*

Why isn't Gen Z freaking out about work?

By LARA WILLIAMS
Bloomberg Opinion

Lara Williams manages Bloomberg Opinion*'s social media channels.*

The last year has been hard for everyone, but spare a thought for youngsters.

Generation Z are at a very delicate stage of life, many in the crucial exam years of their education or taking those first baby steps into the working world. Either way, they appear to be stuffed.

Research suggests that those unlucky enough to start careers in a recession see lower earnings for 10 to 15 years after graduation. Then there are the social effects, including higher divorce rates and shorter lifespans. In the U.S., a 3.9 percentage point increase in the unemployment rate at job market entry has been found to decrease life expectancy by about 6 to 9 months. For the Class of 2020, that could translate into a shortened life span of 1 to 1.5 years.

In this depressing economic outlook, there are clear echoes of the world that millennials found themselves graduating into after the 2008 financial crisis, which has had lasting effects on their careers and well-being.

But is there a case for optimism? Unlike the Great Recession, the Covid-19 downturn appears to have unleashed a wave of entrepreneurialism.

Many new businesses are aimed at creating opportunities in the dislocation by catering to life suddenly going remote. Take, for example, the boom in online retailers. While that doesn't mean all home-bound students were starting their own companies, we do know that the younger generations have an entrepreneurial streak that intensified with the pandemic.

A 2020 survey by Girls With Impact, a nonprofit organization that provides courses for girls about launching businesses and community projects, found that 53% of Gen Z men and women expect to be running their own companies—up from 46% in 2019. Nowhere is this clearer than in the obsession with the side hustle.

Swiping through TikTok or Instagram, it doesn't take long to find clips of enthusiastic teens explaining how they earn money through various side projects—whether it's selling customized clothing, dog walking or offering business services such as copy writing or bookkeeping.

Like millennials, Gen Z aren't strangers to economic disruption. Still very young at the time of the 2008 financial crisis, they saw the impact it had on their parents. Dorie Clark, author of "Entrepreneurial You," told me this might feed into the side hustling trend. "They've grown up in a context where disruption is the norm and so the idea of hedging your bets and trying a lot of different things is not so alien," she said. In fact, for both generations, it may seem like the smart move.

New online marketplaces such as Etsy, Depop and Fiverr are making setting up shop to sell goods and find freelance work easier and cheaper than ever—especially for young digital natives. Just look at the rise of active sellers on Etsy.

Some have turned to remote consulting gigs, especially those who lost their jobs or graduated into the world of Covid-19. A survey by Upwork in June and July last year found that of millennial and Gen Z freelancers, respectively 44% and 36% had started during the pandemic. In the combined millennial-Gen Z workforce, 47% had done such work in the past year. What's more, these freelancers tended to report a lower negative impact from the health crisis.

Could this trend help lift the Classes of 2020 and 2021 out of the recession? While not all side hustles will flourish into full-time employment, they can give young people some added security with an extra revenue stream—a "built-in plan B" as Clark calls it—along with skills that will help them in their careers down the line. Being an entrepreneur is like entering an intense business boot camp, she explains, covering the gamut of marketing, customer acquisition and product development.

Plus, having the purpose of a side hustle and an outlet for creativity could also help ward off some of the adverse mental health effects teens and young adults are suffering amid social-distancing restrictions.

The kids are undoubtedly getting a rough start, and many will need a lot of support to catch up on educational shortfalls and make up for lost opportunities. But I'm confident that Gen Z aren't going to let Covid-19 rip their future out of their hands.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

PANDEMIC

From Page 8

ible work options don't hurt the business, and could in fact help employees be more productive. They should continue telework options after the pandemic. A mom needs to stay home with a sick child or because the babysitter called out sick. Why not let them work virtually if they prefer it?

The pandemic should also spark a broader policy questions about expanding health care, housing and other federal safety net programs. At Health Care For the Homeless the percentage of clients who are women has been increasing for several years. Two years ago women were about 42% of clients and last year 44%; pandemic-induced financial strain likely contributed to people losing their homes. At the same time, private market housing prices have grown well beyond wages while subsidized housing is decreasingly available, said Kevin Lindamood, president and CEO of Health Care for the Homeless. Safety nets are also eroding, he said. The threat to women the pandemic has exposed will continue to be an issue if we don't address larger policy issues that allowed women to fall into such a precarious position in the first place.

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COVID concerns as the sports world turns

Of Play and Players in the Time Of COVID

"The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king."
—Hamlet, Act II, Scene 2

Of play and players in the time of COVID-19
a new billion-dollar home w/no live fans for the Raiders
across the nation and the world a surreal sports scene
COVID gains more fear than Voldemort and 19 Darth Vaders
stadiums contain photos of fans seated in the stands
COVID cases mount daily among healthy team players
schedules and games change as coronavirus demands
sports go on despite NO tickets for fans and less players.

On Saipan island a CNMI sports broadcaster writes poems
fans all over the world miss their hometown arenas
COVID couch potatoes play with remotes in their homes
peaceful social distance between international ballerinas
in Moscow dancing Sergei Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf
while down in More-Old-Ego guess who's playing golf?

Chubby Cheeks as COVID-19 Speaks

Children distant learning in silence can't buy it
chubby cheeks, good diet, COVID lurks don't try it

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

I am doing great, put on weight, an old man's fate,
too much on my plate, however I relish and relate.

The poetry rolls out on cyber scrolls despite the trolls
lately much on corona virus and acquisition of old age
seems to mutate daily on each and every notebook page
hey this is turning into a sonnet but not yet enough on it.

Time teasing of future Zooms puts a bee under my bonnet
now I wait for this message to race through cyberspace
can't get any vaccine appointment at all for my spouse
as we go stir crazy in our non COVID isolation house.

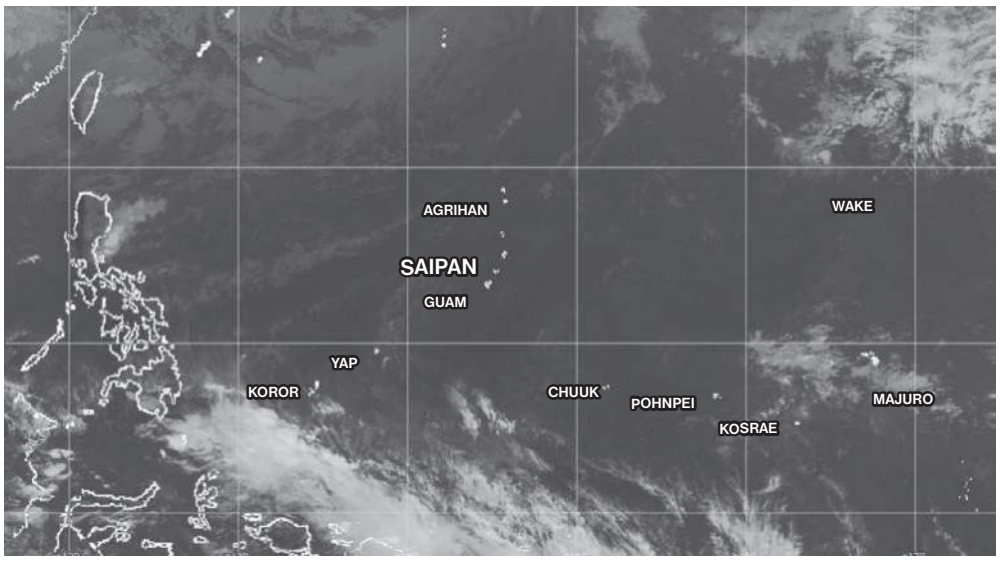
Sunny cool Snow Moon temperatures in Vegas Valley today
now if only COVID-19 and its new mutations would go away.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
86º 76º	86º 76º	87º 77º	87º 77º	87º 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:29 AM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery shows partly cloudy skies over the Marianas and surrounding waters. The trough of yesterday is off to the west now, another minor wrinkle is near 154E. The deep tropical moisture remains trapped south of 12N on our side of 180. The buoys reveal 6 to 8 foot combined seas, composed of a decaying north swell and a combination of east trade-wind waves and swells.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84º / 76º
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84º / 76º
Yap	Showers	85º / 78º
Chuuk	Mostly Sunny	85º / 80º
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	85º / 79º
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	85º / 79º
Majuro	Showers	84º / 79º

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:32 AM	6:25 PM
Friday	6:31 AM	6:25 PM
Saturday	6:31 AM	6:25 PM
Sunday	6:30 AM	6:25 PM
Monday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	10:11 AM	11:16 PM
Friday	-	11:00 AM	5:09 AM
Saturday	12:18 AM	11:52 AM	-
Sunday	1:19 AM	12:48 PM	-
Monday	2:19 AM	1:46 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Sunny	72º / 61º
Beijing	Cloudy	61º / 36º
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	75º / 68º
Honolulu	Cloudy	76º / 62º
London	Mostly Cloudy	52º / 45º
Los Angeles	Cloudy	64º / 53º
Manila	Sunny	91º / 72º
Melbourne	Sunny	97º / 73º
Miami	Mostly Cloudy	80º / 71º
New York	Mostly Cloudy	41º / 36º
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	57º / 46º
Paris	Cloudy	54º / 45º
Busan	Cloudy	55º / 48º
Rome	Showers	63º / 46º
Salem	Showers	75º / 57º
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	55º / 46º
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	57º / 36º
Tokyo	Sunny	57º / 45º
Washington, DC	Cloudy	40º / 39º

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:11 AM	Low Tide	0.56
11:02 AM	High Tide	1.85
6:02 PM	Low Tide	0.07
-	-	-

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:40am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

CHUNG GI WA: 20 years and counting

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Chung Gi Wa celebrated its 20th anniversary last March 1, making it one of the oldest Korean restaurants in the CNMI. And for those who wonder what the term means, Chung Gi Wa roughly translates to "blue roof" in Korean, which alludes to the executive office and official residence of South Korea's head of state.

Restaurant owner Kim Hye Young said her husband, Hong Jin Gyou, established the Korean restaurant back in 2001 because he saw the enormous potential of the island when it comes to drawing not only Korean tourists but Chinese and Japanese tourists as well.

MARK RABAGO
Chung Gi Wa is located at the back of DFS Galleria in Garapan.

Two decades and three addresses later (it used to be located in the building in front of the old Dai-ichi Hotel and then the building across DFS Galleria along Beach Road before moving again seven years ago behind DFS Galleria), Chung Gi Wa is trying to weather the COVID-19 pandemic by depending exclusively on its loyal local customers.

Kim said they were forced to shutter Chung Gi Wa's doors for two months after the CNMI recorded its first case of COVID-19 in March 2020. They eventually reopened for to-go meals and then eventually welcomed dine-in customers back in June when the Community Alert Level was downgraded to Code Blue.

For more information, reservations, and advance orders, call 233-0033 or 483-8158.

"Business has been very hard but thank goodness we still have our regular local customers—local Koreans, local Chinese, local Filipinos, and Chamorros and Carolinians. Our sales are not really good but we just continue as we have longtime employees that also depend on us to stay open," said Kim.

The most popular dishes these customers order from Chung Gi Wa's menu is their $12 lunch specials that come in six varieties—Galbi Set, Bulgogi Set, Chicken Teriyaki Set, Pork Cutlet Set, Spicy Squid Set, and Spicy Pork Set. The bento set is a complete meal with fresh salad, soup, rice, fish, the main viand, and of course plenty of side dishes called *banchan* in Korean.

MARK RABAGO
Owner Kim Hye Young said Chung Gi Wa is weathering the crisis bought by COVID-19 thanks to its loyal local customers.

MARK RABAGO
Chung Gi Wa's $12 Galbi Set lunch special.

"Other Korean restaurants don't have bento like us. We have bento as we have lunch specials everyday," added Kim.

Chung Gi Wa is open from Monday to Saturday, 10:30am-1:30pm and 5pm-9pm, and Sunday, 5pm-9pm. Its capacity is 60 customers under COVID-19 guidelines.

For more information, reservations, and advance orders, call 233-0033 or 483-8158. You can also reach them through their Facebook page: Chung Gi Wa Saipan.

Docomo Pacific renews MINA recycling bin sponsorship

Docomo Pacific, regional leader in innovation, telecommunications, and entertainment, renews their commitment to the Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance and their efforts to sustaining our island's environment and pristine coastal areas.

As part of our company's corporate social responsibility, we understand that we must do our part to ensure that future generations will get to experience our island's natural beauty for years to come. Renewing this partnership with MINA continues to place a recycling bin at the Minachom Atdao pavilion. The bin allows for guests to responsibly dispose of any plastic, glass or paper into its respective slots; keeping the area litter-free.

Docomo Pacific revitalized the Minachom Atdao pavilion in April 2020 and continues to find ways to enhance the area for the community to enjoy.

Docomo Pacific is a wholly owned subsidiary of NTT Docomo, Japan's leading mobile operator. Headquartered in Tamuning, Guam, Docomo Pacific is the largest provider of personal, residential, enterprise connectivity and entertainment services in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Named Guam's most reliable network, based on GWS' 2019 OneScore ranking. Docomo Pacific is also the five-time winner of Pika's Best of Guam and four-time winner of Best of The Pacific. Docomo Pacific is dedicated to bringing you and your family closer to the things that matter most. Get to know more about what makes us "Better Together" at www.docomopacific.com. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, MINA program manager David Benavente, MINA program director Elizabeth Furey, Docomo Pacific general manager Pauline Johnson, and Docomo Pacific CNMI brand owner Brent Deleon Guerrero pose at the MINA recycling bin at the Minachom Atdao.

Target powers through a pandemic; 2020 sales growth explodes

NEW YORK (AP)—Target will plow $4 billion into its business each year for the next several years to redo its stores, add new ones and speed up delivery as the discounter aims to keep up with increasingly demanding shoppers shaped by the pandemic.

As part of the investments announced Tuesday, Target will accelerate the pace of building small-format stores, with plans to add 30 to 40 new stores this year, up from 29 last year. It also will step up the pace of its store remodel program. It will remodel 150 stores this year, and then push that number to 200 remodels a year later.

But safety will remain top of mind even as the threat of COVID-19 should diminish with the vaccine rollout. The Minneapolis retailer says it will implement more contactless features from its restrooms to its checkouts and add distance between merchandise and at the checkout lanes.

The company is also testing a "merchandise sortation hub" in Minneapolis and will build five more this year. The hubs will help sort packages and speed up deliveries to customers ordering more online.

The capital investment is up 50% from the previous year.

The moves come as Target extended its sales streak through the holiday quarter and sales grew by more than $15 billion. That exceeded the company's annual sales growth over the past 11 years combined.

With the habits of millions altered because of the spread of COVID-19, online sales last year surged by almost $10 billion and Target made it increasingly easy to shop.

Fourth-quarter profits soared 66% and sales jumped 21%, both topping Wall Street expectations.

Sales at stores opened at least a year rose 6.9% compared with the same period last year. Online sales soared 118%. Customer traffic in stores rose 3.7%, and average dollars spent rose 15%.

In the previous quarter, same-store sales rose 10%, while online sales spiked 155%.

Target picked up $9 billion in market share from rivals in fiscal 2020.

Big-box stores including Home Depot, Lowe's and Walmart all had huge fourth quarters with Americans still consolidating shopping trips.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

S&P	DOW	NASDAQ
3,883.75	31,478.00	13,142.50
+16.25	+120.00	+87.25
+0.42%	+0.38%	+0.67%

EXCHANGE RATES
In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.28	Hong Kong Dollar	7.76	Russian Ruble	73.87
British Pound	0.7166	Indian Rupee	73.26	Singapore Dollar	1.33
Canadian Dollar	1.26	Japanese Yen	106.69	South Korean Won	1122.30
Chinese Yuan	6.47	Malaysian Ringgit	4.06	Swiss Franc	0.92
Euro	0.8271	New Zealand Dollar	1.37	Taiwan Dollar	27.85
		Philippine Peso	48.57	Thailand Baht	30.25

Nation

Texas becomes biggest US state to lift COVID-19 mask mandate

AP
Signs tells customers about safety measures against COVID-19 that are required inside a retail store Tuesday, March 2, 2021, in Dallas.

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Texas is lifting its mask mandate, Gov. Greg Abbott said Tuesday, making it the largest state to no longer require one of the most effective ways to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The announcement in Texas, where the virus has killed more than 43,000 people, rattled doctors and big city leaders who said they are now bracing for another deadly resurgence. One hospital executive in Houston said he told his staff they would need more personnel and ventilators.

Federal health officials this week urgently warned states to not let their guard down, warning that the pandemic is far from over.

Abbott, a Republican, has faced sustained criticism from his party in America's biggest red state over the statewide mask mandate—which was imposed eight months ago—as well as business occupancy limits that Texas will also scuttle next week. The mask order was only ever lightly enforced, even during the worst outbreaks of the pandemic.

"Removing statewide mandates does not end personal responsibility," said Abbott, speaking from the crowded dining room of a restaurant in Lubbock, surrounded by several people not wearing masks.

"It's just that now state mandates are no longer needed," he said.

The repeals take effect March 10.

The full impact of Texas' reversal was still coming into focus. Target, one of the nation's biggest retailers, said it would continue requiring customers to wear masks in Texas. Mark Cuban, owner of the NBA's Dallas Mavericks, said he had no immediate plans to change the limits on fans at the American Airlines Center, where the biggest crowd so far this season was about 3,000 spectators.

Restaurant owners began confronting whether they, too, would relax COVID-19 safeguards in their dining rooms that were already allowed to be almost fully open. School administrators scrambled to figure out the ramifications for the state's 5 million public school students. Local officials will have some ability to impose new rules if cases spike, Abbott said, but those powers will be limited.

"While we've made significant progress, I'd hate to have that go away," said Tinku Saini, the CEO of Tarka Indian Kitchen, which has locations across Texas. He said he would now allow customers to go maskless but still require face coverings for staff.

At Bob's Steak & Chop House in Dallas, founder Bob Sambol welcomed the ability to make decisions for his own restaurant again, even though he has not decided what approach he'll take. "I have a week, thank God," Sambol said.

Abbott joins a growing number of governors across the U.S. who are easing coronavirus restrictions. Like the rest of the country, Texas has seen the number of cases and deaths plunge. Hospitalizations are at the lowest levels since October, and the seven-day rolling average of positive tests has dropped to about 7,600 cases, down from more than 10,000 in mid-February.

Only California and New York have reported more COVID-19 deaths than Texas.

"Absolutely reckless," California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, tweeted in response to Abbott's announcement.

Texas is fully reopening just ahead of the spring break holiday, which health experts worry could lead to more spread.

"The fact that things are headed in the right direction doesn't mean we have succeeded in eradicating the risk," said Dr. Lauren Ancel Meyers, a professor of integrative biology and director of the University of Texas COVID-19 Modeling Consortium.

She said the recent deadly winter freeze in Texas that left millions of people without power—forcing families to shelter closely with others who still had heat—could amplify transmission of the virus in the weeks ahead, although it remains too early to tell. Masks, she said, are one of the most effective strategies to curb the spread.

The top county leader in Houston, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, said at best the reversal was wishful thinking. "At worst, it is a cynical attempt to distract Texans from the failures of state oversight of our power grid," said Hidalgo, a Democrat.

FBI chief warns violent 'domestic terrorism' growing in US

WASHINGTON (AP)—FBI Director Christopher Wray bluntly labeled the January riot at the U.S. Capitol as "domestic terrorism" Tuesday and warned of a rapidly growing threat of homegrown violent extremism that law enforcement is scrambling to confront through thousands of investigations.

Wray also defended to lawmakers his own agency's handling of an intelligence report that warned of the prospect for violence on Jan. 6. And he firmly rejected false claims advanced by some Republicans that anti-Trump groups had organized the deadly riot that began when a violent mob stormed the building as Congress was gathering to certify results of the presidential election.

Wray's testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, his first before Congress since the insurrection, was one in a series of hearings centered on the law enforcement response to the Capitol insurrection. Lawmakers pressed him not only about possible intelligence and communication failures ahead of the riot but also about the threat of violence from white supremacists, militias and other extremists that the FBI says it is prioritizing with the same urgency as the menace of international terrorism organizations.

"Jan. 6 was not an isolated event. The problem of domestic terrorism has been metastasizing across the country for a long time now and it's not going away anytime soon," Wray told lawmakers. "At the FBI, we've been sounding the alarm on it for a number of years now."

The violence at the Capitol made clear that a law enforcement agency that remade itself after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to deal with international terrorism is now laboring to address homegrown violence by white Americans. President Joe Biden's administration has tasked his national intelligence director to work with the FBI and Department of Homeland Security to assess the threat. And in applying the domestic terrorism label to conduct inside the Capitol, Wray sought to make clear to senators that he was clear-eyed about the scope and urgency of the problem.

In quantifying the scale of the FBI's work, Wray said the number of domestic terrorism investigations has increased from around 1,000 when he became director in 2017 to roughly 1,400 at the end of last year to about 2,000 now. The number of arrests of white supremacists and other racially motivated extremists has almost tripled, he said.

Cuomo avoids public amid outcry over harassment allegations

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has avoided public appearances for days as some members of his own party call for him to resign over sexual harassment allegations.

The governor hasn't taken questions from reporters since a Feb. 19 briefing, an unusually long gap for a Democrat whose daily, televised updates on the coronavirus pandemic were must-see TV last spring.

He was last before video cameras Thursday, when he introduced President Joe Biden at a virtual meeting of the National Governor's Association, which he chairs. He also participated Tuesday in the group's conference call, which was off-limits to reporters.

The public absence was more glaring after legislative leaders announced Tuesday they were limiting the governor's broad powers to unilaterally set state policy during the pandemic.

The governor is also facing criticism for withholding, for months, a full accounting of the number of nursing home residents who died of COVID-19.

Under the bill, Cuomo would still have the power to keep alive his existing COVID-19 rules or tweak them. But he'll no longer be allowed to make decisions without any input from the Legislature. He'll have to notify legislative committees and local governments and respond to their questions in certain circumstances.

Neither Cuomo nor his spokespeople have commented on the latest allegation made against him Monday night. A woman told The New York Times that Cuomo touched her lower back, then grabbed her cheeks and asked to kiss her at a September 2019 wedding.

Most leading Democrats have signaled they want to wait for the results of an investigation by New York Attorney General Letitia James into claims that Cuomo sexually harassed at least two women in his administration.

State Democratic Party chair Jay Jacobs, a close Cuomo ally, said it's "premature" to opine before the investigation concludes.

Several members of the National Governors Association said they support the investigation, but didn't say whether they think he should resign as chair. Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, the association's vice chair, called the allegations against Cuomo "very serious" but said it's up to Democratic governors to decide who will chair the NGA.

"I'm glad there's an independent investigation that's ongoing, and I think we should all wait until the results of that independent investigation and see where that conclusion leads everyone," the Republican governor told reporters.

That inquiry has yet to begin. James said her office is working to hire an outside law firm to conduct it.

U.S. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries said New York's congressional delegation in Washington has not met on the issue but "everyone is monitoring the situation closely."

Asia

Protesters run away from tear gas launched by security forces during an anti-coup protest in Yangon, Myanmar, Tuesday, March 2, 2021. AP

Myanmar police fire tear gas, rubber bullets at protesters

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Police in Myanmar repeatedly used tear gas and rubber bullets Tuesday against crowds protesting last month's coup, but the demonstrators regrouped after each volley and tried to defend themselves with barricades as standoffs between protesters and security forces intensified.

Authorities have escalated their crackdown on the protests in recent days. The United Nations said it believed at least 18 people were killed on Sunday when security forces fired into crowds, while a rights group said more than 1,000 people were detained over the weekend, including an Associated Press journalist. A lawyer for the journalist said he has been charged with an offense that could see him imprisoned for up to three years.

Despite the increasingly brutal crackdown, demonstrators have continued to flood the streets—and are beginning to more rigorously resist attempts to disperse them. Hundreds, many wearing construction helmets and carrying makeshift shields, gathered in Myanmar's largest city of Yangon, where a day earlier police had fired repeated rounds of tear gas. They dragged bamboo poles and debris to form barricades, chanted slogans and sang songs at the police lines. They even threw banana skins onto the road in front of them in a bid to slow any police rush.

The mainly young demonstrators fled in panic each time tear gas canisters were fired but soon returned to their barricades. Videos posted on social media showed similar chaotic scenes in the Insein neighborhood of northern Yangon.

Protesters also took up their flags and banners to march through the streets of Dawei, a small city in southeastern Myanmar that has seen almost daily large demonstrations against the coup. One group of demonstrators was targeted by the security forces as it entered a narrow street on its way to pay respects at the house of a man killed in Sunday's crackdown. Another was attacked on the main street in the city's center.

Police also dispersed protests in Mandalay, the country's second-largest city, on Tuesday.

Yangon, Dawei and Mandalay were among the cities where security forces reportedly fired live ammunition into crowds Sunday, according to the U.N. Human Rights Office. There were reports that they also fired live rounds Tuesday, but they could not immediately be confirmed.

ASIA BRIEFS

PH president fires ambassador seen assaulting staff

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine president has dismissed his former ambassador to Brazil after she was seen on video physically abusing a Filipino member of her household staff. President Rodrigo Duterte said Monday night he had approved a recommendation to fire Marichu Mauro, revoke her retirement benefits and disqualify her from public office for life. The decision comes as Duterte pushes a campaign against official abuses and corruption in his last full year in power. Mauro was recalled from Brazil in October after the video, reportedly taken from security cameras in the ambassador's residence in Brasilia and shown by a Brazilian news agency, showed a woman attacking somebody who appeared to be a house keeper. The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said at the time that the unidentified victim had returned to Philippines and that it was trying to reach her amid an investigation. Mauro has not publicly commented on the allegations. Duterte, whose six-year term ends next year, has been reading the names of government employees and officers implicated in graft and corruption in his TV appearances to highlight his campaign against abuses and irregularities.

Indonesia's Sinabung Volcano spews high column of ash

MEDAN, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesia's Mount Sinabung was erupting Tuesday, sending volcanic materials as high as 5,000 meters (16,400 feet) into the sky and depositing ash on nearby villages. Activity at the volcano in North Sumatra province increased over the past week, with authorities recording 13 times when it released ash clouds. There have been no fresh evacuations due to the activity and no reports of disruptions to flights in the region. The 2,600-metre (8,530-feet) Sinabung was dormant for four centuries before erupting in 2010, killing two people. Another eruption in 2014 killed 17 people, while seven died in a 2016 eruption. The volcano, one of two currently erupting in Indonesia, has sporadically come to life since then. Some 30,000 people have been forced to leave homes around Sinabung in the past few years. Sinabung is among more than 120 active volcanoes in Indonesia, which is located on the "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Ocean.

World

OVER NERVE-AGENT ATTACK

US sanctions Russian officials

The Biden administration sanctioned seven mid-level and senior Russian officials on Tuesday, along with more than a dozen government entities, over a nearly fatal nerve-agent attack on opposition leader Alexei Navalny and his subsequent jailing.

The measures, emphasizing the use of the Russian nerve agent as a banned chemical weapon, marked the Biden administration's first sanctions against associates of President Vladimir Putin. The Russian leader was a favorite of former President Donald Trump even during covert Russian hacking and social media campaigns aimed at destabilizing the U.S.

The government officials included at least four whom Navalny's supporters had directly asked the West to penalize, saying they were most involved in targeting him and other dissidents and journalists. However, the U.S. list did not include any of Russia's most powerful businesspeople and bankers, oligarchs whom Navalny has long said the West would have to sanction to get the attention of Putin.

Tuesday's step "was not meant to be a silver bullet or an end date to what has been a difficult relationship with Russia," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said. "We expect the relationship to continue to be a challenge. We're prepared for that."

The Biden administration also announced sanctions under the U.S. Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act for Russian entities, including those the U.S. said worked to research, develop and test chemical weapons.

The U.S. intelligence community concluded with high confidence that Russia's Federal Security Service used the Russian nerve agent Novichok on Navalny last August, a senior administration official said. Russia says it had no role in any attack on the dissident.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova on Tuesday denounced the new U.S. sanctions as part of its "meddling in our internal affairs."

"We aren't going to tolerate that," Zakharova said in a statement, adding that "we will respond in kind."

"Attempts to put pressure on Russia with sanctions or other tools have failed in the past and will fail again," she said.

The Biden administration has pledged to confront Putin over alleged attacks on Russian opposition figures and alleged malign actions abroad, including the hacking of U.S. government agencies and U.S. businesses. Trump spoke admiringly of Putin and resisted criticism of Putin's government. That included dismissing U.S. intelligence findings that Russia had backed Trump in its covert campaign to interfere with the 2016 presidential election.

The administration coordinated the sanctions with the European Union, which added to its own sanctions Tuesday over the attack on Navalny.

The U.S. and European Union shared concerns about "Russia's deepening authoritarianism," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

"The U.S. government has exercised its authorities to send a clear signal that Russia's use of chemical weapons and abuse of human rights have severe consequences," Blinken said in a statement.

The individuals sanctioned by the U.S. included the head of Russia's Federal Security Service, the head of prisons, Kremlin and defense figures, and Russia's prosecutor general.

The Biden administration had forecast for weeks that it would take action against Russia. Besides the Navalny sanctions, officials have said the administration plans to respond soon to the massive Russian hack of federal government agencies and private corporations that laid bare vulnerabilities in the cyber supply chain and exposed potentially sensitive secrets to elite Kremlin spies.

Navalny, 44, was sickened by the Russian nerve agent in an attack that the United States and others linked to Putin's security services. After months of recuperation in Germany, Navalny flew home to Moscow in January and was arrested on arrival for an alleged parole violation.

His detention sparked street protests across Russia. Police arrested thousands of demonstrators. Authorities have transferred the opposition leader to a penal colony to begin serving a sentence, after what rights groups said was a show trial. ***(AP)***

US demands status of all Syrian detainees be made public

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The United States demanded Tuesday that the status of tens of thousands of civilians detained in Syria during the country's 10-year conflict be made public, and that the bodies of those who died be returned to their loved ones.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield made the demand at an informal high-level U.N. General Assembly meeting on human rights in Syria where she denounced the "brutality" and "untold suffering" caused by Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime and the "appalling atrocities" it has committed.

"The Assad regime continues to imprison tens of thousands of innocent Syrians—women and children, the elderly, doctors and providers, journalists, human rights defenders," she said. "At least 14,000 Syrians have been reportedly tortured and tens of thousands forcibly disappeared."

Her demand for the status of detainees and return of bodies "with the time, place and cause of death" follows Monday's release of a new report by the U.N. Commission of Inquiry on Syria which said the Syrian government arbitrarily arrested and detained individuals and committed "war crimes and crimes against humanity in the context of detention." Other parties in the conflict also committed crimes by unlawfully and arbitrarily depriving individuals of their liberty, it said.

Since Syria's conflict began in March 2011 with anti-government protests that led to a civil war, rival groups have been blamed for atrocities. They run jails where wide violations are reported against detainees.

The Syrian conflict has killed nearly half a million people, displaced half the country's pre-war population of 23 million, including 5 million who are refugees abroad. Large parts of Syria are destroyed and tens of thousands still live in tent settlements.

Thomas-Greenfield said "the United States stands with the Syrian people, Syrian civil society, and a wide group of international partners in demanding accountability and supporting a political solution" set out in a Security Council resolution adopted in December 2015 which unanimously endorsed a road map to peace in Syria adopted in Geneva on June 30, 2012.

It was approved by representatives of the United Nations, Arab League, European Union, Turkey and all five permanent Security Council members—the U.S., Russia, China, France and Britain.

Environment

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM SEA GRANT
Researchers hold certificates of grants they were awarded from the University of Guam Sea Grant program. Each researcher received up to $40,000 in grant funding to conduct critical research on coral reef conditions and marine life. From left, Austin Shelton, director, UOG Sea Grant; David Combosch, assistant professor of population genetics at UOG; Myeong-Ho "Chris" Yeo, assistant professor of surface water hydrology at UOG; Thomas W. Krise, UOG president; Julie Ann Hartup, founding director, Micronesian Conservation Coalition; Fran Castro, associate director, UOG Sea Grant; and Rachael Leon Guerrero, vice provost of research and sponsored programs at UOG.

4 researchers get funding for marine projects from UOG Sea Grant

Three University of Guam professors along with the lead of a community conservation group have been awarded research grants to analyze coral reef conditions and marine life on Guam. The awards are part of an annual competitive opportunity for funding held by the UOG Sea Grant program.

Manta ray tracking by satellite

Micronesian Conservation Coalition founding director Julie Ann Hartup was awarded $40,000 to fund the first manta ray satellite tracking project throughout Micronesia. This was the first time a nonprofit organization has received a research funding award from the UOG Sea Grant program.

"We are beyond thrilled to be awarded this funding and work with University of Guam Sea Grant," Hartup said. "Not only is this study the first of its kind in the region, but it will be fundamental in establishing and laying the groundwork for proper manta ray management and conservation strategies. Understanding manta rays' movement patterns and diving behavior and depths will open a whole new understanding about manta rays that is essential regionally and further unlocks the mystery behind these majestic animals globally."

First-time comparison of Guam and NMI corals

David Combosch, an associate professor at the UOG Marine Laboratory, was awarded $39,148 in funding for the first-ever study to compare corals in Guam to those in the Northern Mariana Islands in regard to their genetics and their resilience to elevated sea temperatures.

"This study could help answer questions about how coral populations replenish themselves after a catastrophic incident, such as a mass bleaching event. If one coral population crashes, it may rely on an influx of larvae from surrounding populations to rebuild or sustain itself," Combosch said. "This is a fantastic chance to do this expedition that I've been dreaming about since I came here five years ago. To finally go that far north and cover the entire archipelago is a really unique opportunity, and I am very thankful to UOG Sea Grant."

In addition, Brett Taylor, a coral reef ecologist and an incoming assistant professor at the UOG Marine Laboratory, was awarded $39,985 in research funding to examine the change in abundance and variety of reef fish on Guam over the span of a decade and its environmental changes.

Sediment impact on coral reefs

Lastly, Myeong-Ho "Chris" Yeo, an assistant professor or surface water hydrology at the Water & Environmental Research Institute of the Western Pacific (WERI), was awarded $33,917 in research funding to characterize the transport of nitrate and sediments to coral reefs on Guam and the resulting impact.

Annual funding opportunity

The grants are available through the UOG Sea Grant Research Competition, which awards several one-year research project proposals each year with $10,000 to $40,000 in National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration funds. These projects must focus on healthy coastal ecosystems, environmental literacy, and/or workforce development in Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Freely Associated States. All projects went through an extensive external review process.

"We are proud of our UOG Sea Grant team for supporting local research to address pressing coastal issues," said UOG Senior Vice President and Provost Anita Borja Enriquez. "Congratulations to Dr. Combosch, Dr. Taylor, Dr. Yeo, and Ms. Hartup for submitting excellent research projects to help accomplish resilient coral reefs and marine ecosystems."

UOG Sea Grant is one of 34 programs within the National Sea Grant College Program—a partnership among universities and NOAA that seeks to enhance the practical use and conservation of coastal and marine resources to create a sustainable economy and environment.

For more information on UOG Sea Grant, visit www.uog.edu/seagrant. ***(PR)***

California's wet season nears an end with big concerns about drought

By KURTIS ALEXANDER
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

A disappointingly dry February is fanning fears of another severe drought in California, and cities and farms are bracing for problems. In many places, including parts of the Bay Area, water users are already being asked to cut back.

The state's monthly snow survey on Tuesday showed only 61%of average snowpack for this point in the year, the latest indication that water supplies are tightening. With the end of the stormy season approaching, forecasters don't expect much more buildup of snow, a key component of the statewide supply that provides up to a third of California's water.

The impact is registering. Growers in the Central Valley are having to make decisions about which crops to prioritize, and which to sacrifice, should the water situation not improve. Urban water agencies, meanwhile, are asking customers to think twice about long showers and outdoor watering. The calls for austerity will feel familiar to many Californians who less than five years ago faced mandatory water restrictions during the 2012-2016 drought.

"This spring we're going to have a robust conservation messaging program," said Valerie Pryor, general manager of the Zone 7 Water Agency, which supplies water to more than 260,000 people in Livermore, Pleasanton and Dublin. "We're pretty confident that if we explain to them the need, they will voluntarily conserve."

The Marin Municipal Water District and the city of Healdsburg are among suppliers that have already begun asking customers to curb their water use. Others are considering doing the same. Each of the thousands of water agencies across the state has its own portfolio of water sources and its own level of vulnerability.

A series of storms in late January offered hope that California's winter, when the state gets most of its precipitation, wouldn't be a bust. However, February saw a return to the dry weather experienced earlier in the season.

San Francisco measured just 1.7 inches of rain last month, 38% of average, while Los Angeles recorded no rainfall, according to the private Golden Gate Weather Services. More importantly, the northern Sierra's 8-Station Index, which tracks rain in the region where California gets the bulk of its water, measured only 45% of average precipitation.

While March and April could still bring rain, the heart of the wet season is over. Much of the state is now poised to have a top-10 dry year. San Francisco's rain season, according to Golden Gate Weather Services, currently stands as its seventh driest dating back to the Gold Rush.

On Tuesday, state water officials manually confirmed year-to-date snow levels in the Sierra Nevada.

The snowpack, often called a "frozen reservoir," is vital to California because it melts after the storm season is over, providing additional flow into rivers and lakes. Snow levels, however, have been in decline in recent decades because of warmer temperatures that have come with climate change.

In the northernmost areas of the Sierra and southern Cascades, snowpack measured 63% of average while measuring 69% in the central Sierra and 45% in the southern Sierra.

"This is now a second dry year, and we always think about drought impacts increasing with duration," said Jeanine Jones, interstate resources manager for the state Department of Water Resources, which conducts the snow survey. "The good news is that California has a robust system of water infrastructure, and that mitigates the effects of one or two water years for most water users."

Still, the state's biggest reservoirs aren't in great shape. Lake Shasta, the largest, had 68% of the water it typically holds this time of year while Lake Oroville, the second-largest, had 55%.

The State Water Project, which moves reservoir water to cities and farms through aqueducts and canals, estimates that its customers will receive only 10% of their requested water this year. Agencies dependent on the project, including the East Bay's Zone 7 and the Santa Clara Valley Water District, will have to turn to groundwater or purchase supplies from others, in addition to conserving.

The Central Valley Project, a parallel waterworks run by the federal government with service tilted toward farmers, announced last week that many of its customers would get just 5% of their requested supply.

If that figure doesn't change, growers similarly will be tapping groundwater or reserves. If alternatives aren't available, they'll have to fallow fields and decrease production. Already, some farmers have left their land unplanted, betting that a turnaround wasn't in store after last year's dry weather. Generally, less profitable row crops such as tomatoes and onions are sacrificed first, but the lack of water could also mean cutting back on high-dollar items such as almonds and pistachios.

"You will see trees not irrigated. You will see trees pushed," said Ryan Jacobsen, CEO of the Fresno County Farm Bureau. "Some of those aren't immediate decisions but they'll come to fruition over the next couple of months."

Life & Style

Yard sale find turns out to be artifact worth up to $500,000

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—Talk about your yard sale finds. A small porcelain bowl bought for $35 at a Connecticut yard sale turned out to be a rare, 15th century Chinese artifact worth between $300,000 and $500,000 that is about to go up for auction at Sotheby's.

The white bowl adorned with cobalt blue paintings of flowers and other designs is about 6 inches (16 centimeters) in diameter. An antiques enthusiast came across the piece and thought it could be something special when browsing a yard sale in the New Haven area last year, according to Sotheby's.

This photo, provided by Sotheby's, in New York, on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, shows a small porcelain bowl bought for $35 at a Connecticut yard sale that turned out to be a rare, 15th century Chinese artifact worth between $300,000 and $500,000. The bowl will be offered in Sotheby's Auction of Important Chinese Art, in New York, on March 17. SOTHEBY'S VIA AP

The piece, one of only seven such bowls known to exist in the world, will be up for auction in New York on March 17 as part of Sotheby's Auction of Important Chinese Art.

The buyer, who is not being named, paid the $35 asking price and later emailed information and photos to Sotheby's asking for an evaluation. The auction house's experts on Chinese ceramics and art, Angela McAteer and Hang Yin, get many such emails every week, but this was one of the kind they dream about.

"It was immediately apparent to both of us that we were looking at something really very, very special," said McAteer, Sotheby's senior vice president and head of its Chinese Works of Art Department. "The style of painting, the shape of the bowl, even just the color of the blue is quite characteristic of that early, early 15th century period of porcelain."

They confirmed it was from the 1400s when they were able to look at it in person. There are no scientific tests, only the trained eyes and hands of specialists. The bowl was very smooth to the touch, its glaze was silky and the color and designs are distinctive of the period.

"All the characteristics and hallmarks are there that identify it as a product of the early Ming period," McAteer said.

2nd Jacob Lawrence painting missing for 6 decades located

SALEM, Mass. (AP)—A second panel from American artist Jacob Lawrence's sweeping series "Struggle: From the History of the American People" that has been hidden from public view for decades has been located, the Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts announced Tuesday.

This image provided by Peabody Essex Museum of Salem, Mass., shows a 1956 painting "Immigrants admitted from all countries: 1820 to 1840—115,773," by Black American artist Jacob Lawrence. AP

Officially titled "Immigrants admitted from all countries: 1820 to 1840—115,773," the painting known as panel 28 had not been seen in public since 1960 and was known only through a black-and-white reproduction.

"We are thrilled to share news of this important discovery, especially at a time when Americans are actively engaged with democracy," Lydia Gordon, the museum's associate curator said in a statement. The Salem-based Peabody Essex Museum organized the exhibit.

The painting will now join nearly 30 of the Black artist's other works painted in the 1950s for the last two stops of a national tour in Seattle and Washington, D.C., museum officials said. The 30-piece series remains incomplete, as the whereabouts of three panels remain a mystery, the museum said.

The 12-inch-by-16-inch (30.5-centimeter-by-40.5-centimeter) panel was found in a New York City apartment, like another painting in the series, panel 16, that was rediscovered in a different home in October. The owner, who wants to remain anonymous, inherited the panel 28 from family, who—like the figures depicted—were immigrants.

The egg tempera on hardboard piece in vivid reds and yellows depicts two women in shawls clutching babies, one of them nursing, as well as a man wearing a wide-brimmed hat and holding a flower pot containing a single red rose, America's national flower. The subjects have oversized hands, symbolizing what it meant to arrive only with what could be carried, the museum said.

It was inspired by a table of immigration statistics published in Richard B. Morris's Encyclopedia of American History.

"Lawrence created this body of work during the modern civil rights era to interpret pivotal moments in the American Revolution and early decades of the republic as ongoing struggles," Gordon said.

'Vaccine, vaccine': Dolly sings 'Jolene' rewrite before shot

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Dolly Parton has written hundreds of songs over her decades-long career and it turns out her tune "Jolene" is the just right one for getting her COVID-19 vaccine.

Parton

"I even changed one of my songs to fit the occasion. It goes, 'Vaccine, vaccine, vaccine, vaccine, I'm begging of you please don't hesitate,'" the actor, singer and humanitarian sang in a social media post on Tuesday, just before receiving her shot.

The Grammy-winning legend turned 75 this year. In 2020, she donated $1 million to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee, for coronavirus research.

Parton had earlier told The Associated Press that she was going to wait until it became more widely available because she didn't want to look like she was jumping the line.

Parton wore a purple shirt with shoulder cutouts just for the occasion and a matching purple mask. She put on a typical show, laughing, cracking jokes with the doctor and making sure her hair was looking good.

"That didn't hurt. Just stung a little bit," she said afterward. Then she smiled at the camera saying, "I did it! I did it!"

Man's bisexual past gnaws at woman's sense of trust

DEAR ABBY: I am a 49-year-old woman who has been in a romantic relationship with a good, caring man for two years. We live together, and he shows me all the time how much he loves me. We have amazing chemistry and are very affectionate. We enjoy spending time together, especially outdoors.

When we first started dating, he told me he was bisexual and had had relationships with men. He insists I am his true love and he is with only me now. He has never shown signs of straying, but sometimes I get insecure and wonder if I should take him at his word that he only wants me. Should I trust him?

WANTS TO BE SURE IN RHODE ISLAND

DEAR WANTS: This man has been upfront with you. Because someone finds members of both genders attractive does not mean the person is incapable of monogamy. During the last two years, he has given you no reason to believe he is untrustworthy, so take steps to deal with your insecurity and take him at his word.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My son and daughter-in-law—the parents of three minor children—were divorced in 2019. Prior to their divorce, the ex-DIL got pregnant by another man. She has since had a little girl. My dilemma is, do I include the new little girl when they come to visit Grandma? She is still my grandchildren's half-sister. As they get older and come to visit me, I would feel bad leaving her out of events.

My son is livid that I would even consider including her. Her other grandparents refuse to have anything to do with her. How do I deal with this?

DILEMMA IN THE MIDWEST

DEAR DILEMMA: You have a loving heart. I assume all the children live together with their mother. To exclude their half-sister would be logistically difficult and cruel to a child who is blameless. Your son may not like the situation, but it is time for him to grow up and face reality. You are the only grandmother that child has ever known, so remain calm, assert your right to self-determination and refuse to allow yourself to be bullied or intimidated.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Unfortunately, I am not in the same income bracket as my family and some of my friends. Also, I married a guy who doesn't like to socialize because he's a recovering alcoholic, and he also has hearing problems. Family and friends rarely ask us to join them when they go out, but they never fail to call and tell me all about the great time they had and where they plan to go next. It hurts, and I resent them for it. I want to be happy for them and not feel the way I do. Help!

DIFFERENT IN NEW YORK

DEAR DIFFERENT: Your husband may have hearing problems, but your relatives appear to be tone deaf in the sensitivity department. What they are doing is cruel.

Rather than compare your life to that of friends and relatives who have more freedom to socialize than you and your husband do, it would be more constructive to figure out what you CAN do. Socialize either with others or by yourselves in places that don't serve alcohol and aren't overly noisy. Ask your relatives to join you there—and put the ball in their court.

■■■

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

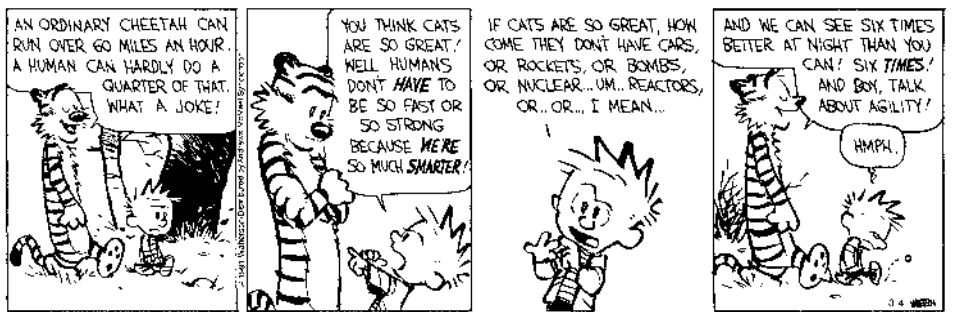
By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


AN ORDINARY CHEETAH CAN RUN OVER 60 MILES AN HOUR. A HUMAN CAN HARDLY DO A QUARTER OF THAT. WHAT A JOKE!
YOU THINK CATS ARE SO GREAT? WELL HUMANS DON'T HAVE TO BE SO FAST OR SO STRONG BECAUSE WE'RE SO MUCH SMARTER!
IF CATS ARE SO GREAT, HOW COME THEY DON'T HAVE CARS, OR ROCKETS, OR BOMBS, OR NUCLEAR... UM.. REACTORS, OR.. OR... I MEAN...
AND WE CAN SEE SIX TIMES BETTER AT NIGHT THAN YOU CAN! SIX TIMES! AND BOY, TALK ABOUT AGILITY!
HMPH.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

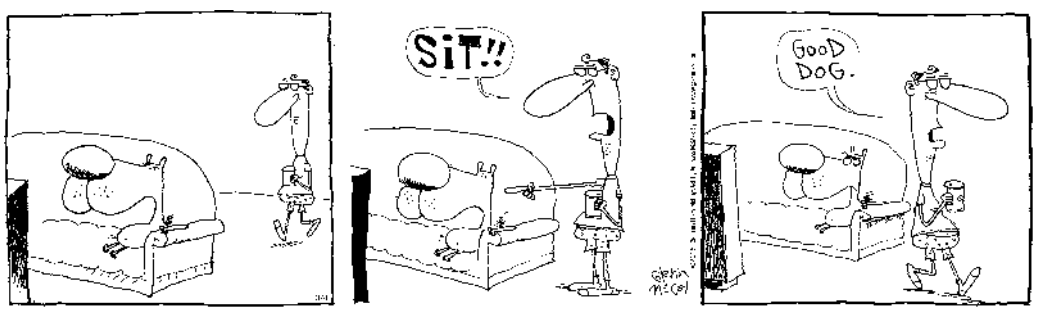
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

NOW THAT THERE'S E-LEARNING THERE'S NO NEED FOR SNOW DAYS!
IT'S NOT RIGHT! I WANT A SNOW DAY!
MRS. HANNIGAN IS PROBABLY OVERJOYED ABOUT ALL OF THIS.
AT MRS. HANNIGAN'S HOUSE:
I WANT A SNOW DAY!!

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

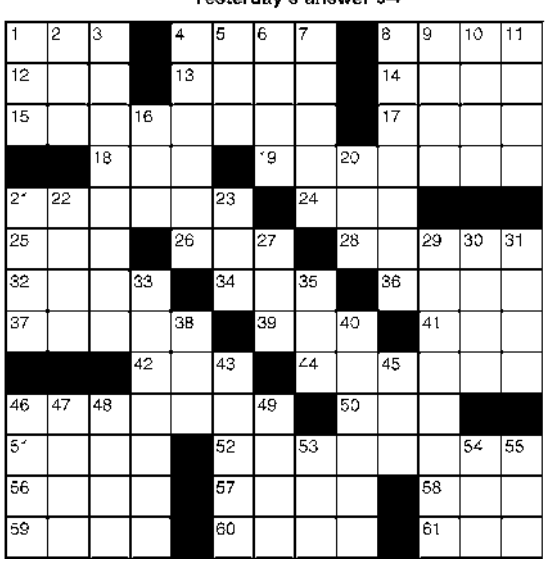
ACROSS
1 "Terrific!"
4 Declare
8 Gush
12 Have bills
13 Repulsive
14 Give up
15 Former Fed head Ben
17 Opera house solo
18 Pre-schooler
19 Less corpulent
21 Gung-ho
24 Kreskin's claim
25 Yale grad
26 Shred
28 Harvest goddess
32 Poet — St. Vincent Millay
34 Mahal preceder
36 Jeans-maker Strauss
37 Elena of the Supreme Court
39 Bankroll
41 Sea, to Henri
42 May honoree
44 Taxi devices
46 Seattle player
50 Nonstick spray
51 Hurler Hershiser
52 Salad ingredient
56 "Walk Like —"
57 Converse
58 Punk-rock subgenre
59 Ilk
60 Bohemian
61 Boring routine

DOWN
1 Watch chain
2 Shock partner
3 Sleeping area on a ship
4 Online icon
5 Sports-caster Scully
6 Fraternal group
7 "Super-man" star
8 Surgeon's tool
9 Impudent
10 Actress Falco
11 Sport
16 Neither here — there
20 Computer key
21 Stench
22 Alan of "The West Wing"
23 Chart-topping song
27 Dog's foot
29 Call to mind
30 Always
31 Round Table titles
33 "Winnie-the-Pooh" author
35 Bread spread
38 Dijon denial
40 Sheriff's helper
43 Pilgrimage site
45 Highland hat
46 Castle defense
47 Multitude
48 Gather
49 German river
53 Sylvester, for one
54 Outback bird
55 Hog-wash

Solution time: 24 mins.

T	E	A		P	L	A	N		A	F	F	A
R	I	M		A	A	R	E		F	A	L	L
A	R	E		U	N	I	V	E	R	S	A	L
Y	E	N	T				E	M	I			
			W	I	S	E		S	C	A	R	E
U	N	I	O	N	I	Z	E		A	H	E	M
M	A	C		A	T	I	L	T		O	B	I
P	R	E	P		U	N	I	R	O	Y	A	L
S	C	A	R	F		F	F	O	C			
			I	R	S			T	T	O	P	S
U	N	I	C	Y	C	I	F	S		R	A	A
F	I	R	E		O	I	N	K		E	R	G
O	L	E	S		T	I	D	Y		Y	E	S

Yesterday's answer 3-4



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Chaz Bono, 51; Patricia Heaton, 63; Mykelti Williamson, 64; Catherine O'Hara, 67.

Happy Birthday: Take charge of your life. Refuse to let anyone undermine you or push you in a direction you don't want to travel. Focus on what you enjoy doing, and be responsible for your happiness. Change begins with you, not an outsider who doesn't understand your needs. Be brave, think outside the box and follow your heart. Make romance a priority. Your numbers are 6, 17, 23, 27, 35, 39, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Pay attention to detail. Don't risk your health and physical well-being. Rely on your intelligence, not your emotions, when making financial decisions. An abrupt change will evoke trouble with one of your confidants. Consider the consequence before taking a stance. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Partnerships will intensify. Listen and observe before you reveal your feelings or intentions. Have your facts straight and a reasonable alternative prepared before you try to persuade others to do things your way. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* You'll be ill-advised by someone using emotional tactics to route you in the wrong direction. Focus on the truth, facts and what you see with your own eyes. Do for yourself, and avoid being put in a challenging position. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* You'll adjust quicker than you anticipate if you make a move or change the way you do things. Let your imagination lead the way, and you'll see the potential in something or someone you've grown to enjoy. Show your true feelings. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Concentrate on something you enjoy doing. Refuse to let what others do upset you. Pay attention to what and who will help you gain the most. Invest time and money in something that you do well, and opportunities will unfold. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Concentrate on home, family and what brings you the most joy. Nurture meaningful relationships, and strive to make your home welcoming. A lifestyle change will be energizing and encourage self-improvement and better health. Make romance and love priorities. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Figure out the best way to proceed, then take action. Don't wait for someone to step in and take over. Indecisiveness will be your downfall. Engage in doing what you do best, and you'll find a way to meet your obligations. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Discuss what's bothering you, and you will nullify a challenging situation. The sooner you find out where you stand, the easier it will be to make adjustments that improve your life. New beginnings will lead to better days ahead. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Keep your intentions honorable. Don't support someone who has a hidden agenda or uses manipulative tactics to sway people's opinions. Take a no-nonsense approach to how you live, what you believe and how you treat others. Honesty and integrity are desirable. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Channel your energy into getting ahead. Productivity will lead to opportunity. Take action, and turn an idea you have into something concrete. A change of heart will help you maneuver your way into something worthwhile. Romance will enhance your life. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* A challenge will leave you feeling confused. Take a closer look, and you'll discover you have the upper hand. Use the experience you have to overcome any change that comes your way. Prepare to take action and control of your life. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Push for what you want. Be aware of what's going on around you, and use whatever is available to navigate your way to achieve your pursuits. A change of heart will help you ditch a concept or individual who is holding you back. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are resourceful, impatient and ambitious. You are convincing and original.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	1			2			9	
9		5	6		8	7		3
	3						6	
2		6	3		7	9		4
	8			9			2	
1		2	4		3	5		7

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/04

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	8	5	4	6	9	7	3	1
6	4	3	2	1	7	8	9	5
9	7	1	3	8	5	4	6	2
3	9	7	8	5	6	1	2	4
8	2	6	1	4	3	5	7	9
5	1	4	9	7	2	6	8	3
4	6	9	7	2	1	3	5	8
1	5	2	6	3	8	9	4	7
7	3	8	5	9	4	2	1	6

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/04

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

CREDENZAS — Solution: 10 letters

S	R	M	I	R	R	O	R	E	D	O	O	W	G	D
S	E	S	T	E	N	I	B	A	C	R	K	R	A	D
A	T	I	L	S	T	A	I	N	E	D	A	N	I	E
L	N	B	Ⓔ	Ⓢ	Ⓐ	Ⓒ	R	L	D	N	R	C	L	S
G	A	F	N	E	N	O	O	R	I	O	G	D	K	L
T	C	R	O	R	O	S	A	T	T	E	N	S	P	E
N	E	A	R	D	N	O	E	A	R	A	H	O	V	E
A	D	M	I	O	B	F	R	U	H	E	L	R	R	H
R	M	E	C	P	F	E	T	U	L	I	E	O	D	W
U	O	E	U	U	G	I	T	V	S	S	L	A	E	M
A	O	C	B	I	N	C	E	H	W	T	V	A	S	E
T	R	I	R	R	H	S	P	M	A	L	I	G	K	J
S	D	F	U	T	E	N	S	I	L	S	E	C	U	O
E	E	F	L	O	W	E	R	S	L	L	A	T	E	M
R	B	O	O	B	M	A	B	A	S	K	E	T	S	M

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Bamboo, Baskets, Bedroom, Buffet, Cabinets, Case, Console, Cupboard, Dark, Decanter, Desk, Door, Dresser, Flowers, Frame, Furniture, Glass, Granite, Handle, Hutch, Iron, Jute, Lamps, Legs, Meals, Metal, Mirrored, Office, Polish, Rack, Refrigerator, Restaurant, Rustic, Serve, Shelves, Stained, Table, Utensils, Vase, Wall, Wheels, Wood

Yesterday's Answer: Rum Cay

The NEW **Treasury 43** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Jokic's triple-double leads Nuggets to rout of Bucks

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Nikola Jokic reached a career milestone and helped the Denver Nuggets snap the Milwaukee Bucks' five-game winning streak in emphatic fashion.

Jokic had 37 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds for his 50th career triple-double and the Nuggets trounced the Bucks 128-97 on Tuesday. Jokic has nine triple-doubles this season.

The only other NBA player to collect at least 50 triple-doubles while primarily playing center was Wilt Chamberlain.

"It just speaks to his greatness.," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "The guy doesn't get fatigued. He doesn't get tired. When he was out of the game, he was in the huddles, he's on the bench imploring his teammates to rebound and play defense and move the ball. When your best player is doing that, that really sends a message."

Jamal Murray added 24 points as the Nuggets earned their third straight victory and showed no signs of wear one night after winning 118-112 at Chicago.

Denver handed Milwaukee its most lopsided loss of the year and shot 55.8%, the highest field-goal percentage by any Bucks opponent this season.

"It's definitely up there for best win of the year," Malone said.

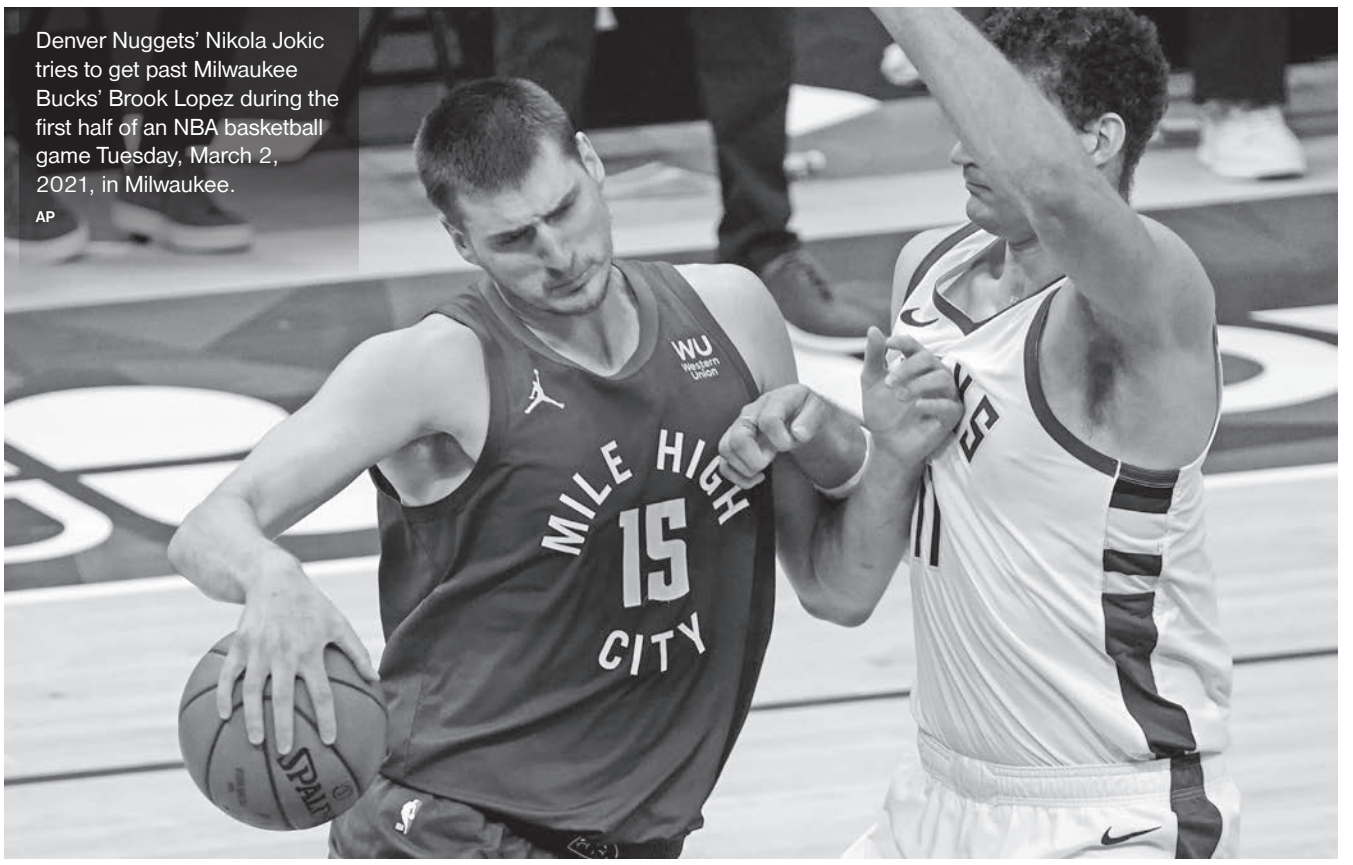
Giannis Antetokounmpo had 27 points and eight rebounds for Milwaukee as the Bucks finished an eight-game homestand in which they went 5-3. Khris Middleton added 20 points.

The Bucks were held below 100 points for just the third time this season. Their 97 total points were one off their season low as they struggled early.

"We just were not good against the zone," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "We've got to do everything better."

Antetokounmpo had his string of four straight games with at least 35 points end. The reigning two-time MVP was one off the team record owned by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who scored at least 35 points in five straight games on two separate occasions during the 1972-73 season.

P.J. Dozier had 19 points, Will Barton 14, Michael Porter Jr. 11 and Monte Morris 10 for Denver. Brook Lopez had 12 points for Milwaukee.



Denver Nuggets' Nikola Jokic tries to get past Milwaukee Bucks' Brook Lopez during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, March 2, 2021, in Milwaukee.

AP

Raptors will be short-handed when they return to floor

The Toronto Raptors will have enough players to get back on the floor Wednesday, after a pair of games earlier this week were postponed for virus-related issues.

But the Raptors will be seriously short-handed when they host the Detroit Pistons in Tampa, Florida — with starters Fred VanVleet, Pascal Siakam and OG Anunoby all ruled out in accordance with the league's health and safety protocols, along with Malachi Flynn and Patrick McCaw.

Also still out: coach Nick Nurse, who entered the protocols last week along with five other members of his staff. Assistant coach Sergio Scariolo, who led Toronto to a win in its most recent game on Friday, will remain in the acting-coach role on Wednesday.

"We will try to do our best for the guys who won't be able to be with us tomorrow," said Scariolo, who has been in contact with Nurse regularly throughout this process.

The Raptors were able to do some on-court work Tuesday but have had "multiple days of no new cases," general manager Bobby Webster said.

"It's been a tough couple of days," Webster said. "To get to here and be able to practice, we had to clear a number of hurdles."

Toronto has two games left before the All-Star break, with the Wednesday game against Detroit to be followed by a Thursday matchup at Boston. Webster indicated that the players who will be sidelined Wednesday aren't expected back Thursday.

The Raptors' games against Chicago on Sunday and Detroit on Tuesday were pushed back, bringing the league's total number of games moved because at least one team would not have enough players eligible to play this season to 31. The Wednesday game between Toronto and Detroit is a makeup of the Tuesday contest.

"It's what you can imagine," Webster said. "It's the emotional stress of having colleagues that potentially, obviously, can be sick. The enormous amount of stress everyone feels, everyone's walking a bit on eggshells here in the locker room and you can't necessarily be as friendly. ... The basketball will go on, we'll play the games, but just to maintain everybody's belonging and familiarity is really important."

The only teams that have not had a game postponed by virus issues so far this season are Brooklyn, the Los Angeles Clippers and the Los Angeles Lakers. But the Lakers had an issue appear on their injury report Tuesday, when they ruled center Marc Gasol out for their game against Phoenix because of the protocols.

And the New York Knicks lost Derrick Rose for Tuesday's game, placing him on the protocols list for their game in San Antonio about an hour before that contest was to start. Entering the protocols can mean any number of things, including but not limited to a positive test, an inconclusive test or contact tracing suggesting possible exposure to a person positive for COVID-19.

The roster hits to the Raptors are significant. VanVleet and Siakam are tied for Toronto's team lead in scoring at 20.1 points per game, and Anunoby is averaging 13.8 points. VanVleet was also the only Toronto player to start all 34 of the team's games this season.

The Raptors called up a pair of reinforcements from their Raptors 905 team in the G League bubble in nearby Lake Buena Vista, Florida—bringing in Jalen Harris and Donta Hall for Wednesday. ***(AP)***

Hawks 94, Heat 80

In Miami, Trae Young took over late and made sure Nate McMillan would win his debut as interim coach of the Atlanta Hawks.

Young scored 18 points, including 13 straight for his team in the fourth quarter, and the Hawks snapped Miami's six-game winning streak by beating the Heat 94-80 on Tuesday night.

John Collins scored 17 for Atlanta, which lost at Miami on Sunday and fired coach Lloyd Pierce on Monday. Kevin Huerter scored 16 for the Hawks and Clint Capela had 10 points and 17 rebounds.

"Losing Coach Pierce, we all had to do better," McMillan said. "And that was the challenge to this team tonight. He took a hit because we didn't do what we were supposed to be doing out there. And I thought tonight, they did better."

Duncan Robinson and Goran Dragic each scored 14 for Miami, which missed a chance to get over .500 for the first time this season. Bam Adebayo scored 11 for the Heat, who shot 37%—their fourth-worst showing of the season.

Grizzlies 125, Wizards 111

In Washington, Ja Morant had 35 points and 10 assists, De'Anthony Melton and Dillon Brooks each added 20 points, and the Memphis Grizzlies beat the Washington Wizards 125-111 on Tuesday night.

Jonas Valanciunas had 11 points and 16 rebounds for Memphis, which has won back-to-back road games for the first time since winning four in a row away as part of a seven-game win streak from Jan. 8 to Feb. 1.

After a dominant second quarter, the Grizzlies led by double digits for all but 44 seconds of the second half to follow a 133-84 victory at Houston with another comfortable win.

"In the past, we've got up big and we've let teams come back, let teams have confidence," Melton said. We really are just working on attacking from the jump, dominating every minute of the game we can, honestly.

Russell Westbrook had 23 points and 15 assists for the Wizards, but also committed eight of Washington's 22 turnovers.

Celtics 117, Clippers 112

In Boston, the Celtics have had trouble at times this season holding on to leads late in games.

Boston benefited from the surprise absence of one of the league's top stars to avoid that and post its first winning streak in a month.

Kemba Walker had 25 points and six assists, and the Celtics took advantage of a late scratch of All-Star Kawhi Leonard and held off the Los Angeles Clippers 117-112 on Tuesday night.

Jaylen Brown finished with 18 points. Jayson Tatum and Payton Pritchard each added 14 as the Celtics posted three straight victories for the first time since January.

The Clippers, who have lost five of eight, played without Leonard after he was ruled out shortly before the game due to back spasms.

Paul George led Los Angeles with 32 points. Reggie Jackson took Leonard's place in the starting lineup and finished with 25 points and seven assists.

Spurs 119, Knicks 83

In San Antonio has discovered its depth amid the injuries and health problems that have plagued the team all season.

Trey Lyles scored a season-high 18 points, Dejounte Murray added 17 and the Spurs used a balanced effort to beat New York 119-83 on Tuesday night, ending the Knicks' three-game winning streak.

Lyles is the ninth player to lead San Antonio in scoring this season, tying Memphis for most in the league. The Spurs have needed that depth with Derrick White, LaMarcus Aldridge, Rudy Gay and Keldon Johnson among those missing time with injuries or due to health and safety protocols for COVID-19.

"I think it just goes to show Coach that we have a lot of depth," Lyles said. "We're able to play guys that usually aren't playing, but they're ready. Just goes to show that we stay prepared in the gym and are ready for the moment."

San Antonio had eight players score at least eight points, with Patty Mills and Luka Samanic each adding 14 points in the Spurs' seventh straight home victory over New York.

Immanuel Quickley led New York with 26 points. RJ Barrett added 15 and All-Star Julius Randle had 14.

Suns 114, Lakers 104

In Los Angeles, Dario Šarić scored 10 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter, Mikal Bridges added 19 and the Phoenix Suns overcame Devin Booker's ejection for a 114-104 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night.

Booker scored 17 points before getting ejected for arguing with 7:10 left in the third quarter. The Suns (23-11) still took charge down the stretch and cruised to their 15th victory in 18 games while also moving past the defending champions (24-12) into second place in the Western Conference by winning percentage.

LeBron James scored 38 points for Los Angeles, which has lost five of seven with mounting injury problems. Dennis Schröder added 17 points, but the Lakers couldn't keep up without regulars Anthony Davis, Kyle Kuzma and Marc Gasol.

Kuzma was a late scratch with a bruised right heel, while Gasol missed his first game under the NBA's health and safety protocols.

Booker was whistled for two technical fouls in remarkably rapid succession, resulting in the All-Star's second ejection in just over five weeks.

Indians' Francona says team didn't cover up for Callaway

CLEVELAND (AP)— Responding to claims the team protected Mickey Callaway, Indians manager Terry Francona said no one in the Cleveland organization "covered up" for the former pitching coach who's under investigation by Major League Baseball following allegations of sexual harassment.

Callaway is currently suspended as the Los Angeles Angels pitching coach, pending the MLB inquiry.

The Athletic reported Tuesday that 12 current and former Indians employees came forward in the last month to say Callaway's actions were so obvious inside the team that "it would have been difficult for top officials to not be aware of his behavior."

Callaway's alleged lewd behavior while he was with the Indians from 2013-17 included sending inappropriate photos, requesting nude photos in return and making women "feel uncomfortable."

"Nobody's ever deliberately covered up for anybody, I can tell you that," Francona said on a Zoom call from the team's spring training complex in Goodyear, Arizona.

The Indians followed with a statement a few hours later.

"Our organization continues to actively cooperate with MLB on their investigation into Mickey Callaway," it said. "It is important we honor the confidentiality and integrity of that investigation. While we don't believe the reporting to date reflects who we are as an organization, we will not comment further on the specifics of this matter."

"We remain committed to creating an inclusive work environment where everyone, regardless of gender, can feel safe and comfortable at all times. We will let our actions – not just our words – reflect our commitment."

AP

Cleveland Indians pitching coach Mickey Callaway, left, watches with manager Terry Francona during the first inning of a baseball game against the Detroit Tigers, in Detroit, in this May 3, 2017, file photo.

Shortly before Francona spoke to the media, his son, Nick, posted on Twitter that he had read the new story on Callaway and confronted his father. The younger Francona said the Indians "are clearly in the wrong."

"Their behavior is unacceptable, and even worse, it's hard to have faith in them to improve and learn when they seem more concerned about covering up wrongdoings that addressing them honestly," Nick Francona wrote.

The 61-year-old Francona, who managed only 14 games last season because of health issues, said his son's comments were painful.

"I love all my children unconditionally," he said. "As you can imagine, that's a very difficult thing to see. So to deal with it publicly is hurtful."

According to The Athletic report, some of the employees found it difficult to believe the Indians were caught off-guard by the Callaway accusations.

"I laughed out loud when I saw the quote (in the original report) that said it was the worst-kept secret in baseball, because it was," one unidentified former employee told The Athletic. "It was the worst-kept secret in the organization."

Earlier, Francona, who is in his ninth season with Cleveland, was asked if he was troubled by the report.

"I have never worked in a place where I have more respect for people than here," he said. "And I've been very fortunate to work for some wonderful people. I believe that in my heart. I don't think today is the day to go into details, things like that."

"I do hope there is a day, because I think it would be good, and I think it's necessary," he said.

Last month, Indians president of baseball operations Chris Antonetti said he wasn't aware of Callaway's behavior until he read about it in a story by the Athletic, which detailed Callaway's pursuit of women over a five-year period with three teams.

Callaway was Cleveland's pitching coach from 2013-17 before he was hired to manage the New York Mets.

Angels manager Joe Maddon declined to comment Tuesday on the latest report, citing the team's ongoing investigation.

"I just can't," Maddon said. "There's nothing for me to comment, add or subtract, whatever. We'll just let this play itself out. We'll find out where it lands, and then we'll take it from there, but for right now, I can't say anything."

Callaway pitched for the Angels in 2002 and 2003 while Maddon was the team's bench coach. Callaway was Maddon's first major hire when he took over in Los Angeles in 2019.

California labor law typically requires a full investigation of such allegations before an employee can be fired for cause if the employee denies wrongdoing. The Angels already promoted bullpen coach Matt Wise to serve as interim pitching coach last month.

When he spoke on Feb. 4, Antonetti said he was "distraught" and "disturbed" by the allegations against Callaway. Antonetti expressed regret that none of the accusers felt they could come forward and that the team was committed to making its workplace safe.

Antonetti added that he was not aware if the Mets had reached out to the Indians before they hired Callaway in 2017.

On Monday, Mets president Sandy Alderson acknowledged the team was perhaps short-sighted in its hiring process and probably should have done a better job of vetting Callaway.

Braves' Freeman celebrates his new baby 'twins with a twist'

Freddie Freeman found a way to top the double honors of winning the NL MVP and Hank Aaron Award.

The Atlanta Braves first baseman's bigger thrill is having two new baby boys. He describes his babies, Brandon and Maximus Turner, as his "twins with a twist."

The twist is they were born six weeks apart.

Freeman's wife, Chelsea, gave birth to Brandon on Dec. 30. A surrogate mother gave birth to Maximus Turner on Feb. 14, delaying Freeman's arrival to spring training by about a week.

The boys join Charlie, who is 4, to give Freeman three sons — and an extraordinary story of faith, perseverance and parenthood.

"Pretty special offseason, all the way around, baseball and obviously personal life," Freeman said Tuesday.

"We're a family of five now. It's pretty amazing."

Freeman said his wife was told she may not be able to have another child following Charlie's birth by emergency cesarean section. The couple tried without luck for two years in their attempt to become pregnant again.

"It just wasn't happening," Freeman said. "We chose the surrogate route and nine days before the embryo transfer, I come home from a workout and Chelsea tells me she's pregnant. I was like just shocked. Not something we were expecting at all."

Freddie and Chelsea stayed with their new surrogate plan and made preparations for two babies in their home.

"It's everything you could want and more," he said. "It's such a crazy situation to try and wrap your mind around it, but when you're in it and both boys are here it's like the best thing that could have happened."

While his wife is home with the babies, Freeman and several family members, including his father and grandfather, have Charlie in North Port, Florida for spring training. He said being away from his babies and wife will make this "probably the hardest spring for me."

It's a small price to pay for realizing his dream of having a big family and seeing Chelsea give birth to her second child.

"Infertility is something people don't really talk about," he said. "We struggled with it for multiple years, especially when having Charlie happened so easily and so fast and then it doesn't happen. It takes a toll on Chelsea and it took a toll on me. ... I could try to be as comforting as possible, but it was definitely one of the toughest situations I've faced in my life, to try and comfort my wife through such an emotional rollercoaster ride she was on."

Freeman knows other couples have endured similar pain.

"For people who are going through it, there is a light at the end of the tunnel and there are different ways to figure it out," he said.

Freeman said he and his wife suffered when it didn't seem possible to have more children. Then came the unexpected news.

"You could just see when she told me she was pregnant, it was like a complete boulder falling off her shoulders," he said. "I got my wife back. She was always great all the way through it, but once she was pregnant it was just amazing."

It was the perfect offseason to Freeman's most successful season. He hit .341 in 2000 and won the Hank Aaron Award as the NL's outstanding offensive performer after being named NL MVP.

Freeman also led the Braves to within one game of the World Series.

His success didn't seem likely when he had high fever, causing him to pray "Please don't take me" following a COVID-19 diagnosis before the delayed start of the 2020 season.

He led the NL with 23 doubles and hit 13 homers with 53 RBIs in the regular season before landing 28 of the 30 first-place votes in the MVP balloting by members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

Following his late arrival to spring training, with came with the approval of manager Brian Snitker, Freeman's challenge is to repeat his 2020 success.

Snitker said Tuesday Freeman's first spring game should come on Friday.

"He felt good yesterday," Snitker said. "I think it's just getting him back on the field and getting grounders and running around and getting the swings.

Freeman, 31, is entering the final year of a $135 million, eight-year contract. For now, however, his focus is on his two baby boys — and perhaps a baby girl down the road.

"Everything with the birth was good," he said of Chelsea. "Maybe she'll do it again. We definitely want to have a girl, so kids are not done in our future." ***(AP)***

Vikings cut Kyle Rudolph after 10 years for cap savings

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)— The Minnesota Vikings released two-time Pro Bowl tight end Kyle Rudolph on Tuesday, ending his 10-season run with the team to create a little more than $5 million in salary cap space.

Rudolph is fifth in franchise history with both 453 catches and 48 touchdown receptions. He was due to make $7.65 million in 2021. By terminating his contract with three years remaining, the Vikings will carry a salary cap hit of $4.35 million in dead money this season.

"A pro's pro," quarterback Kirk Cousins said on Twitter. "Best hands and the smartest player I'll ever play with."

Rudolph, who caught the winning touchdown pass from Cousins in overtime of Minnesota's win at New Orleans in the wild-card round of the playoffs after the 2019 season, had his usage in the passing game drop off considerably over the past two years as the Vikings leaned hard on running back Dalvin Cook and their top two wide receivers.

Rudolph was the team's nominee for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award in 2017, 2018 and 2019 for community service. He and his wife, Jordan, developed a deep fondness for the patients at the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital.

"From the moment we drafted Kyle as a young man out of Notre Dame in 2011, through his 10th season with the Vikings in 2020, he has been one of the premier tight ends in the NFL and most influential and positive leaders I've ever been around," general manager Rick Spielman said in a statement distributed by the team. "Kyle and Jordan have made such an immeasurable impact on our team and community that may never be matched."

The Vikings will now certainly expand the role of Irv Smith Jr. at tight end, where Tyler Conklin also made strides in 2020 as a run blocker and pass catcher. The 31-year-old Rudolph's leadership and reliability will be missed, though. He started 98 consecutive games including the playoffs until a foot injury kept him out of the final four weeks last season.

Rudolph's touchdown total is the most among tight ends in Vikings history. In a farewell-to-Minnesota essay posted on The Players' Tribune website, he said he was particularly proud of leaving the Vikings as their longest-tenured player.

"An insane run in today's NFL. I mean, we made it to a third contract with each other," Rudolph said, noting his prime parking spot in the lot at team headquarters. "Just an unbelievably clutch situation during those Minnesota winters. Hate losing it, but shout-out to the next car up. Treat our spot well."

AP

In this Sept. 22, 2019, file photo, Minnesota Vikings tight end Kyle Rudolph (82) runs from Oakland Raiders cornerback Daryl Worley (20) after making a reception during the first half of an NFL football game in Minneapolis.

Chariton wins February Ace

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Chariton

Keone Chariton was crowned the Marianas Golf Association's February Ace of the Month last Feb. 20 at the Coral Ocean Resort.

Chariton bested 36 other members shooting 42 in the front nine and a 37 in the back nine for a gross score of 79.

Sporting a 16 handicap and a net score of 63, Chariton was crowned the February Ace. Isaac Aguon and Joe "Kamakaze" Camacho tied for the second-lowest net score of the day with a 66, but Aguon edged out Camacho on a scorecard playoff to bag second place.

Closest to the pin winners were Don Hallmark, Chris Groves, Camacho, and James Benavente. All closest to the pin winners went home with an extra $205 each.

A total of 45 players joined the monthly ace as aside from the 36 members, nine guests also participated.

MGA's golf season runs from May 2020 through April 2021.

MGA's March Ace is scheduled for Saturday, March 13, at Kingfisher Golf Links in Talafofo. Showtime is 9am and tee-off is 10am shotgun.

MGA holds monthly aces once a month circulating around the four current golf courses and is inviting interested golfers to join the MGA club.

Interested individuals can reach out to any current MGA member for details. New members' annual fee is $40 and returning members is $30. This is a one-time fee that gets you an MGA polo shirt and hat.

KANOA

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goal apiece.

Shirley's 5, Southern United 2

Shirley's coasted past Southern United last Sunday behind Jeraldine Castillo who earned two goals. Marrielle Gariguez, Kristanna Lim, and Stephanie Lumbad added four to triumph in their game.

MASTERS DIVISION
Paire 1 1, Kanoa 0

Paire 1 outclassed opponent Kanoa last Sunday led by former national player Patty Coleman who scored the only goal of the game.

Paire 2 4, TanHoldings 1

Paire 2 beat TanHoldings behind Tanuja Edvalson who found the back of the net in four occassions to lead the team to victory.

KHS

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spot in the leaderboard.

MHS, despite falling short last Saturday, still held on to the No. 2 spot with a total of 11 points. MHS' back-to-back second place finishes in the preliminary and final race of the 1,000m course gave them 6 points, putting them at a slight advantage.

SSHS is slowly but surely gaining on MHS with a total score of 9 points on the division's leaderboard.

The boys division of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series will continue this Saturday with another 500m and 1,000m preliminary and finals race. The men's competition will start at 8:45am at Kilili Beach (start and finish). The canoe series are being held with assistance from Northern Marianas Paddle Sports.

TREVALLY DERBY WINNER FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Raffy Panelo, a Mobil Oil Marianas tanker driver, won the Kristo Rai Trevally Hunters Derby after catching a 6.6-lb trevally, also known as talakitok, at a beach near the Carolinian Utt in Garapan. Derby coordinator Carlos Ballesteros awarded Panelo $700 in cash prize, $50 in gift certificates, and $115 worth of gifts. It was the sixth fishing day of the friendly competition that started last Feb. 1. For the second successive Sunday, Panelo joined the event that drew a record 73 entries. The derby will resume this coming Sunday for the second and third prize pot money, plus other gifts at the Pakpak Beach in San Antonio.

Jokic's triple-double leads Nuggets to rout of Bucks

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Sports

Indians' Francona says team didn't cover up for Callaway

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Kanoa bags first win of season

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA
Kanoa Football Club's Khristelle Itaas scored a goal in the club's first win of the 2021 Dove Spring Women's League last Sunday.

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA
Shirley's Football Club and Southern United Football Club players nudge each nudge each other for the ball during the opening game of the 2021 Dove Spring Women's League last Saturday.

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Kanoa Football Club claimed the first victory of the season with a lopsided win in Division A of the 2021 Dove Spring Women's League against Tan Holdings Football Club at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Sunday.

Kanoa crushed Tan Holdings, 7-3, behind Krizel Tuazon who contributed three goals with help from Lalaine Pagarao who put up two. Paulynn Joyce and Khristelle Itaas added one goal apiece.

Tan Holdings' Mia Abuan carried her team with a pair with help from Tamia Hix who found the back of the net once.

In the first match in Division A, Shirley's Football Club prevailed over Southern United Football Club, 7-6.

Katrina Costales led Shirely's to victory with three goals with assistance from Julianne Hall, Jerlyn Castillo, Fiona Bucalig, and Lillian Podziewski who contributed one goal apiece.

Southern United's Kaithlyn Chavez anchored her team's victory with a pair of goals while Christina Atalig, Jannah Casarino, and Summer Manahane scored one goal apiece.

DIVISION B
MPU 2, Kanoa, 1

MP United nosed out Kanoa during the first match in Division B last Sunday. Breanna Lee and Laarni Zapanta led the team to victory with one

See KANOA on Page 19

KHS pads lead in PSS canoe series

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Kagman High School continues to hold the pole position in the boys division of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series after securing first place in the third leg of the series last Saturday in the waters off Kilili Beach.

KHS remains the team to beat after dominating the third leg of the series (long distance) after completing the 4.5-mile course in just 48:12.13, keeping them in first place with 5 points.

The KHS crew consists of Noah Mesa, Elbert Pinaula, Christian Achas, Koen Kabriel, Jericho Jones, Jacoby Cabrera, Joedy Pinaula, Andrew Camacho, David Igisiar, Sebastian Muna, Max Cruz, Richard Cepeda, and Oliver Weilbacher.

KHS edged Saipan Southern High School who came in second with a time of 49:01.93, giving them 3 points. The SSHS paddle team includes Jermaine Salas, Michael Peters, Eric David, Rashan Paul, Salvatore Gotti, Rexon Calage, Julian "Bill" Calvo, Vincent Christopher Tudela, Nathaniel David, and Darien Quitugua

Marianas High School, which is Top 2 in the leaderboard, fell a few seconds short and placed third last Saturday, trailing closely behind KHS and SSHS, submitting a time of 49:01.93. MHS' team includes Mario Aldan, Kaden and Maxwell Church, Towa Irinaka, Maui Johnson, Jigger Parayaoan, Jin Park, Jon Joseph Villagomez, Blake Mister, Justin Weaver, and William Kim.

In the last two rounds of the series, KHS has held a steady lead, placing first in both the preliminary and final race of the 500m and 1,000m course, giving them 5 points each. Overall, KHS has 25 points to take the top

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Kagman High School's paddlers, seen here in a file photo, continue to lead the standings of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Series.